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CASKET

OF

REMINISCENCES,

BY

HENRY S. FOOTE.

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PREFACE.

The author of the Reminiscences contained in this volume has little to say in regard to them by way of proem. They were written to amuse a few hours of the summer and autumn of the present year, and appeared almost daily in the columns of the WASHINGTON CHRONICLE precisely as they were originally thrown off from his pen. Though very sensible of their deficiencies in point of literary finish, he has not judged it expedient to modify them in any essential particular; and he will, indeed, be highly gratified if they shall now be read by those into whose hands they may chance to fall with as much interest as they seemed originally to awaken.

He has no apology to make for certain rather unkind strictures indulged in regard to several individuals upon whose character and conduct he has undertaken to remark. He has chosen to speak the unvarnished truth, both as to men and things; and he is quite well satisfied that, sooner or later, all considerate and impartial men will come to the conclusion that in doing so he is not justly subject to censure. Should there be those who shall choose to join issue with him as to facts herein narrated they will now have it in their power to do so under circumstances altogether convenient to them.

Casket of Reminiscences.

REMINISCENCE No. I.

JAMES MONROE—JOHN QUINCY ADAMS—CHIEF JUSTICE MARSHALL—HENRY CLAY—ROBERT J. WALKER—MR. WEBSTER—JENNY LIND.

An opinion has long prevailed that such as have been blessed with more than ordinary multiplicity of years, and whose opportunities of observing the course of public affairs have been at all favorable—so long, at least, as the *mens sana in sano corpore* shall be vouchsafed to them—may be reasonably presumed to hold in the storehouse of memory many facts, the accurate and impartial recital of which might be expected to prove more or less instructive and entertaining to persons of a more limited experience. It is doubtless upon some such notion as this, whether well or ill founded, that I have been persuaded to enter a field already in part occupied by others, whose diverse merits I have no wish to call in question. Not purposing to write either history or biography in a regular manner, I shall probably not be subjected to anything like acrimonious criticism if I shall in a great measure disregard mere order of time, and describe such scenes as may casually suggest themselves to my recollection, in a very desultory manner, and with something of the unaffected simplicity of oral narrative.

It chanced that I was in the city of Washington during the latter part of the winter of 1824–'5, having been attracted thither, as many thousands besides had been, by the interesting scenes of one kind or another known to be there enacting. The Electoral Colleges in the States having failed to give to either of the four Presidential candidates a majority of votes, upon the House of Representatives in Congress was devolved the duty of selecting a President from the three candidates who had been the recipients of the largest number of electoral votes. After an intensely interesting struggle Mr. John Quincy Adams was chosen, and preparations were made for his inauguration. This took place in the hall of the House of Representatives, and I had the honor to witness this ceremony, which to me at the time was full of novelty and interest. Mr. Adams seemed to me to be then quite a robust man, and of a far more animated and hopeful aspect than he was in after years. When he advanced across the floor of the hall and received the volume containing the oath of office from the hands of the venerable Chief Justice Marshall, his step was firm, and his manner was marked with a placid dignity very imposing indeed. He enunciated the oath in a clear and distinct tone, and ascended the Speaker's chair for the purpose of delivering therefrom his inaugural address. Then it was that he seemed to me to evince some embarrassment, and the paper from which he read rattled in his tremulous hands to such an extent that the noise from it was distinctly heard by auditors in the gallery of the House, where I was myself located.

When the address was brought to a close, most of those present proceeded to the White House in order to take leave of Mr. Monroe, who was about to set off for his private residence in Virginia. Curiosity led me thither. I was much struck with the very healthy and vigorous appear-

ance of this venerable man. Though I had seen him often before, I had never approached him so nearly as on this occasion. His appearance and manners were full of life and cordiality. His face wore a kindly and genial smile, and he was evidently rejoicing inwardly at being relieved at last from the toils and cares of office. I saw Mr. Adams also in the throng of those who were eagerly pressing forward to shake hands with his predecessor. He seemed to be wholly unnoticed, and to be in a gravely meditative mood. I was anxious to see him more distinctly, and I urged my way to his whereabouts perhaps a little indelicately. When I beheld him nearly I found that he was actually *weeping*. The tear-drops, which were constantly distilling from his eyelids, he ever and anon wiped away with a white linen handkerchief. The spectacle which I beheld reminded me very forcibly of what I had read of the laughing and the weeping philosopher of the olden time. Here I saw a President of the United States departing from office to all appearance replete with hilarity and joyousness, while he who was presently to fill his place seemed smitten with unappeasable anguish and melancholy. I did not then know what I soon after learned, that the tear-shedding which had so painfully attracted my attention was with Mr. Adams but an "ordinary inundation," and the result of an optical distemper of very long standing.

So soon as the leave-taking was over at the White House, a very numerous body of citizens flocked to Mr. Adams' private residence, in order to partake of a sumptuous banquet which had been prepared for their enjoyment. Now, in connection with this same banquet, which I did not attend, there has been buzzing about my cranium ever since a not unpleasant reminiscence. When the banqueters returned from Mr. Adams' house, several of

them mentioned to me, in very kind terms, the hospitable attentions of which they had been recipients, and, among other things, spoke in language of warm commendation of the two sons of Mr. Adams, who had superintended the distribution of creature comforts to the numerous guests assembled around the table, which was literally groaning with all the choicest viands which the Washington market could supply. These young gentlemen were described as each of them holding in his dexter hand a bright silver ladle, with which he lavishly apportioned to the eager visitants the most delicious oyster soup, dipped out of a splendid china bowl of most gigantic proportions, which sat smoking before them. The elder of these scions of a noble stock I had incidentally met at the Bedford Springs, in Pennsylvania, the summer before. I regretted to see his untimely decease reported in the newspapers a few years later. To his younger brother, Charles Francis Adams, now so creditably known on both sides of the Atlantic, I had the honor of being casually introduced one night at the theater in Washington. I saw him again, in company with his brother John, at the inaugural ball, which took place upon the evening of the 4th of March. Our slight personal acquaintance has never been subsequently renewed, nor do I suppose that he now remembers that we ever met. I have been, though, for many years, a diligent observer of his course, and while I have not always been able to concur with him upon the public questions which have been from time to time agitated, his intellectual powers have ever commanded my respect, and I have never at all distrusted either his integrity or his patriotism.

It is well known to all the readers of our national history that the administration of Mr. Adams had to encounter much and fierce opposition in various quarters.

He and all the prominent members of his Cabinet were objects of unsparing denunciation, and even sometimes also of ridicule. All sorts of accusations were preferred against himself and Mr. Clay in particular, and they were freely denounced as the upholders of corruption and the enemies of freedom. Nearly a half century has now passed away since that Administration was brought to a close. The prejudices and passions connected with the period in which it had its course are almost absolutely extinct, and now "returning Justice, lifting aloft her scale," attests to all the generations of the future that the Republic has never known a time in which public men of greater virtue and wisdom occupied the high places of civil trust, or when all the concerns of the Government were more successfully and economically administered, than between the 4th of March, 1825, and the 4th of March, 1829.

Of Mr. Clay I shall have a good deal to say hereafter. Mr Adams I never knew intimately. I saw him for the last time at his own house, in Washington, on the 1st day of January, 1848, and had a short conversation with him. He was then very pale and thin, and I left him with the impression that he could not long survive. When he fell suddenly in the House of Representatives, a few weeks later, while in the act of delivering an eloquent and powerful speech upon a question which involved his feelings very deeply, there was probably not a member of Congress of any party who did not feel the most poignant distress and chagrin.

Mr. Adams was, upon the whole, one of the most remarkable men that our country has produced. Honest, warm-hearted, and fearless, he disdained to conceal his opinions upon any subject involving the welfare of his country or the happiness of his kind. His mind was by nature active, vigorous, and capable of the highest cul-

ture. His early education, under the direction of his venerable father, had been most judicious and complete, and he had devoted almost his whole life to the acquisition of knowledge of every kind, both theoretic and practical. He was a ripe scholar, and was thoroughly versed in every department of modern literature. His pen, as a political controversial writer, was one of the most potential that the country has known. He does not seem to have gained much reputation as a speaker in the earlier stages of his public career. When in the national Senate, before he had yet attained middle age, he is not known to have distinguished himself as a debater on any noted occasion. But on his becoming a member of the House of Representatives, several years subsequent to his defeat for re-election to the Presidency, he discovered powers of discussion for which no one had ever before that period given him credit. I very much doubt whether a more accomplished and effective speaker was ever heard in that body. His command of language was unlimited; his knowledge of public affairs was such as perhaps no other American statesman has ever possessed, which gave him a great advantage over those with whom he had from time to time to conflict; his memory of past transactions was never at fault; and when he felt himself to be in the right, he feared not the weapons of any adversary. His powers of sarcasm and denunciation were positively terrific, and no man ever dared to awaken his ire whom he did not speedily compel to regret his temerity. His superiority to all the flimsy and tinseled declaimers of the period, who, with a vain and silly ambition, sought to draw him into conflict, was so conspicuous that even those who disliked him most were constrained to recognize him as a victor in every such conflict. Mr. Adams seemed to belong to a class of persons of whom only a few have made their appear-

ance either in ancient or modern times, in whom imagination, conjoined with retentive memory and fervid sensibilities, grew more and more vigorous and luxuriant up even to the end of their mortal career. Thus was it with the venerable author of the Apocalypse, with Plato, with Sophocles, and with Edmund Burke. On the day of Mr. Adams' lamented decease, I do not at all doubt that he was the most splendid and picturesque rhetorician then living; and he is known to have often indulged in poetical effusions, both of a grave and sportive character, which would have done credit to an Ovid or a Tibullus. A day or so before his death he wrote a beautiful little sonnet to a charming young lady of his acquaintance, which was shown to me by Caleb Lyon, of Lyondale—a copy of it having been given to him by Mr. Adams himself—with the sweetness and beauty of which I was much impressed.

Robert J. Walker told me more than once that Mr. Adams, several years anterior to 1844, predicted in his hearing and in a manner exceedingly solemn and earnest, that in less than twenty years African slavery would be extinguished in the United States—adding that he expected himself to witness its overthrow.

A few days subsequent to the decease of Mr. Adams, on a convivial occasion, when all present were lamenting that event, and commending his social and domestic virtues, as well as his extraordinary ability, I recollect Mr. Webster to have said: "Well, gentlemen, all you say is doubtless true; Mr. Adams was a very remarkable man; no one can doubt his talents or his moral worth; but you will permit me to say that I do not recollect that this gentleman ever gave utterance to a truly national sentiment after he took his seat in the House of Representatives." This was almost the only time that I

ever knew this liberal-spirited and wonderfully gifted man to express himself, in private converse, in terms of decided decrial of any cotemporary statesman dead or living.

The incidental mention of Mr. Webster's name brings up in my memory a rather curious and interesting scene which I witnessed in the summer of 1850. The Compromise struggle, which had been in progress for some months, had just terminated. The dangers which were supposed to menace the destruction of the Federal Union established by our fathers, it was hoped, had been effectually obviated by a wise and salutary "plan of adjustment," as I remember George M. Dallas to have called it, and the extremists of either section, it was believed, had been defeated in their respective schemes of mischief. All Washington was rejoicing over this noble result, and patriotic men of all parties were reveling in a sort of fraternizing jubilee. Next to Mr. Clay himself, Mr. Webster was supposed to have signalized himself in this ever-memorable conflict, and from the day when he had delivered his celebrated 7th of March speech he had been receiving every hour, in one form or another, the tokens of public gratitude. This was perhaps the most happy moment of his life. He had efficiently contributed to save the Union from ruin and his native land from bloodshed and devastation, by aiding in the bringing of men of genuine national sentiment into manly and heroic combination for the overthrow of sectional factionists, alike of the South and of the North. He had risked his own beloved popularity in that contest, perhaps more seriously than any other man; but the Republic was safe, and his own great soul was full of gladness and gratitude. Just about this time the Russian Minister of that period, the well-known Mr. Bodisco, summoned the august Secretary

of State under President Fillmore and the members of the two Committees on Foreign Affairs of Congress to a dinner at his mansion in Georgetown, to do appropriate honor to the birthday of the Emperor Nicholas, which was then at hand. Several of the new Cabinet of Mr. Fillmore I recollect also to have been present on this occasion, and, among others, Mr. Stuart, of Virginia, then Secretary of the Interior. Seldom has a more splendid banquet been spread, and greatly was it enjoyed by all who had been invited to partake of it. Mr. Webster offered the toast in honor of his Imperial Majesty, and accompanied it with one of the most dignified, conciliatory, and truly statesmanlike speeches I ever listened to. Neither Pericles nor Tacitus, in their most inspired moments, could have given a more noble and felicitous expression to stately and elevated thoughts and sentiments concerning the happiness and true glory of governments and of peoples. When the dinner was over, Mr. Webster, in his most bland and courteous manner, approaching Mr. Stuart and myself, invited us to accompany him in his carriage back to Washington, suggesting that he would be pleased if we would go with him also to the opera, where Jenny Lind was to regale, for the last time, a Washington audience with her charming minstrelsy. There was, of course, no refusing such an invitation, so we hurried forward with glowing anticipations of enjoyment to the appointed scene of entertainment. On arriving at the door of the opera-house Mr. Webster entered in his grandest manner, and slowly passed down the central aisle of the building. It chanced that Jenny Lind was then on the platform, and was about to commence singing our inspiring national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." So soon as Mr. Webster's approach was perceived the assemblage spontaneously broke forth with

tempestuous applause, evidently recognizing it as a remarkable coincidence that the renowned defender of the Constitution should have happened to come in at the very moment that the sacred emblem of the nation's liberty and union was on the eve of being rapturously apostrophized in song. So soon as the audience settled down into quietude the inspiring tones of Jenny Lind's marvelous voice were heard. Never, either before or since, have I been made so overwhelmingly sensible as I was on that occasion of the commingled power of music and sentiment. The whole concourse really appeared to be electrified. Mr. Webster was so transported with delight that he actually seemed almost to become unconscious of the presence of others, and hummed very distinctly in unison with the varying tones of the songstress. All the enthusiasm of his soul had evidently been kindled into flame; all his patriotic pride had been awakened, and his whole moral nature appeared to have been "touched and inspired" by the seraphic sounds to which he was an enraptured listener. When the song was over, Mr. Webster—as if impelled by a sense of official duty to offer, in the name of the great nation which he felt himself entitled in some degree to represent on this occasion, the formal tribute of its respect—rose from his seat, and, stepping forward to a central position between the audience and the platform upon which Jenny Lind was standing, made her one of the most honoring and majestic bows I ever beheld. The amiable and accomplished recipient of a homage as unexpected as it must have been gratifying, manifested something of a graceful and blushing embarrassment, but courtesied notwithstanding most profoundly in response, upon which the assembled multitude gave vent to their delight in most vociferous applause. A second bow was administered, with precisely similar

accompaniments. A third one was tendered, when the charming "Swedish Nightingale," as she was called, incontinently took wing and became invisible to our fond and admiring eyes, perchance forever! The newspapers next morning duly noted this interesting incident, and, much to their credit be it spoken, made none but the kindest comments thereupon. Certainly, all who had the happiness to be present that night withdrew to their homes both loving and honoring more highly than they had ever done before the high-souled and grandly-endowed statesman of Massachusetts, after this wondrous *politico-histrionic* performance of his.

REMINISCENCE No. II.

MR. BERRIEN—FRANCIS S. KEY—CHARLES J. INGERSOLL—MR. WIRT—MRS. LEE—GENERAL LEE—WILLIAM H. FITZHUGH—GENERAL GRANT.

I do not remember to have at any time witnessed a more interesting forensic discussion than one to which I had the pleasure of listening in the chamber of the Supreme Court of the United States in the beginning of the month of March, 1825. A vessel engaged in the African slave trade had been a month or two before seized by a revenue cutter of the Government upon the coast of Florida, and had been regularly libeled for confiscation under the act of Congress declaring this species of traffic to be piracy. This case involved pecuniary interests of much magnitude, and certain moral considerations, also, of much delicacy and dignity. The argument attracted a large assemblage of refined and intelligent persons of either sex. The discussion was opened by the celebrated Francis S. Key, so honorably known then and now as the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Mr. Key had been employed to aid the Attorney General, (Mr. Wirt,) while Charles J. Ingersoll, of Philadelphia, and John M. Berrien, of Georgia, were enlisted in the defense. I was very much entertained with the whole argument, but I was particularly charmed with the speech of Mr. Key and that of Mr. Berrien, both of which I now propose to notice very briefly. Mr. Key was tall, erect, and of admirable physical proportions. There dwelt usually upon his handsome and winning features a soft and touching pensiveness of expression almost bordering on sadness, but which, in moments of special excitement, or when any-

thing occurred to awaken the dormant heroism of his nature, or to call into action the higher powers of his vigorous and well-cultivated intellect, gave place to a bright ethereality of aspect and a noble audacity of tone and gesture which pleased while it dazzled the beholder. His voice was capable of being in the highest degree touching and persuasive. His whole gesticulation was natural, graceful, and impressive, and he was as completely free from everything like affectation or rhetorical grimace as any public speaker I have known. He had a singular flow of choice and pointed phraseology, such as could not fail to be pleasing to persons of taste and discernment; and I am sure that no one ever heard him exhibit his extraordinary powers of discussion, to whom the ideas to which he essayed to give expression seemed at all cloudy or perplexed, or his elocution clogged and torpid, even for the shortest possible period of time. On this occasion, he greatly surpassed the expectations of his most admiring friends. The subject was particularly suited to his habits of thought, and was one which had long enlisted, in a special manner, the generous sensibilities of his soul. It seemed to me that he said all that the case demanded, and yet no more than was needful to be said; and he closed with a thrilling and even electrifying picture of the horrors connected with the African slave trade, which would have done honor either to a Pitt or a Wilberforce in their palmiest days.

Mr. Berrien (with whom I afterward had the honor of enjoying much familiar intercourse) was now making his first public appearance in Washington. His fame, both as a jurist and advocate, had preceded him. His early affiliation with the Federal party had heretofore operated as an insuperable impediment to his political advancement in Georgia, but being now in full unison with the politi-

cal sentiment then prevailing, the Legislature of that State had recently elected him to a seat in the national Senate, a special session of which body was expected to commence on the 4th of March.

The advent of Mr. Berrien had naturally awakened much curiosity, and when he rose to address the court he found himself encircled by a vast and eager assemblage. From the beginning of his grave and impressive exordium, up even to the close of his splendid peroration, he was listened to with unbroken attention, and never was speech more deserving of this quiet but expressive homage. Mr. Berrien appeared to be at this time about forty-five years of age, but it was whispered in certain circles that he was at least ten years older. He was of a medium height, exceedingly compact in his frame, agile in all his movements, of a fresh and healthy complexion, neat and even elegant in his attire, and as stately and dignified in his general demeanor as would at all have comported with that cordial courtesy and flowing affability for which he was ever distinguished. His visage betokened much of intellectual power. His forehead, though not unusually high, was broad and well developed; his eyes large, lustrous, and penetrating; his voice, which I suspect to have been assidulously cultivated, was deficient neither in compass nor melody; it was distinct, sonorous, and impressive. He evinced on this occasion the most complete self-possession, and seemed to hold under easy and effective control all the faculties of his mind and all the passions of his soul. He wandered not for a moment from the main points in controversy; he indulged in no extravagant flights of fancy; dwelt not over long upon any of the topics discussed by him; attempted no tinseled rhetoric; essayed no pompous declamation; put in use no trivial strokes of humor; uttered no florid panegyric, and ful-

minated no tempestuous, overstrained denunciation. The clear and copious stream of his methodical and well-digested logic flowed on in steady and unruffled grandeur like some smooth, majestic river, fed by exhaustless fountains, ever moving forward evenly within its banks, never spreading out its waters in unnavigable shallows, nor breaking forth beyond its assigned boundaries and carrying desolation and terror to regions far remote. This first speech of Mr. Berrien in Washington was perhaps as brilliant a *debut* as this country has yet known; and I would willingly travel many miles to hear one at all approaching to it in felicity of conception or effectiveness of delivery.

When it was brought to a close, I looked round upon that quiet and refined assemblage, and saw unmistakable tokens of approval upon all faces. A goodly number of those present were then known to me. Among the auditors I well remember a bevy of fair ladies and handsome, well-dressed gentlemen, who occupied a sofa to the left of the bench upon which the judges sat. I will mention one or two of them, beginning with William H. Fitzhugh, of Ravensworth, in Virginia. This gentleman possessed a noble and prepossessing exterior. His face was marked alike with benevolence and intellect. He was reputed to be wealthy, and doubtless was so. He was generally looked upon as decidedly the most rising young statesman in the Old Dominion, now that Armistead C. Mason was in the grave. He had for some years honorably occupied a seat in the Senate of Virginia, and stood high both as a speaker and as a sound, practical legislator. He was born and reared to manhood, as I have learned, in a noble mansion, yet standing upon the bank of the Rappahannock, just opposite Fredericksburg, and in sight of the neat and comely dwelling in which the childhood and

youth of the great Washington received that training and nurture which fitted him for the glorious part he was to take in his country's history. Mr. Fitzhugh was himself possessed of as much of the true Washingtonian spirit as any man then living. He died very suddenly a year or two after the scene which I have been describing, leaving behind him a wife, who, I rejoice to learn, is still living. This lady was also present during the speech of Mr. Berrien, as was also Mrs. Custis, the wife of George Washington Parke Custis, formerly so well known in Washington, and so much beloved and venerated.

Seated near these ladies was one whom I am tempted more particularly to describe. I allude to the only daughter of Mrs. Custis, the present Mrs. Lee.* She was then about sixteen years of age, and was indeed "the observed of all observers." Her personal charms were such as must inevitably have commanded admiration and sympathy, independent of the adscititious advantages which so richly clustered about her. No one, I am confident, has ever beheld a more placid and winning face than that which was now presented to my gaze. She was richly but plainly attired, as was her mother, and there was a modest and reserved dignity about both of them that significantly bespoke their rank and bringing up. Miss Custis was described to me by those who knew her best as a young lady of sound and vigorous intellect, in which judgment and discrimination decidedly predominated. Her education had been in all respects such as was best calculated to make her alike happy herself and the source of abundant utility and happiness to others. Those who had beheld her venerated ancestress, the wife of Washington, often pointed out the striking resemblance which they supposed themselves to have discerned between this

* This amiable and accomplished lady died a month or two after this notice of her.

noblest of American women and the youthful representative of her virtues and her blood. Miss Custis was the heiress expectant of two of the largest estates that Virginia could then boast, and it is rather a curious and interesting fact that her uncle, William H. Fitzhugh, already spoken of, was one of the first large owners of slaves in Virginia who provided for their emancipation by will, and provided liberally also for their future education and support.

I had not the honor of forming Mrs. Lee's personal acquaintance in 1825, and the various accidents of a vexed and tumultuous life withheld me from the enjoyment of a blessing which I should always have so highly prized until the lapse of thirty-seven years had proven to both of us how "time steals *on* us and steals *from* us; snatching fire from the mind and vigor from the limb." When I met her by accident in Richmond one morning in the year 1862 I found her pale, attenuated, and hobbling on crutches. She was then the mother of a numerous and worthy offspring, and the dutiful and loving wife of one of the most renowned military commanders of the age. How my heart sorrowed over the troubles and sufferings which I was told she had been compelled to endure as the result of a most calamitous and wasting war, in the bringing on of which, perhaps, no two persons on this broad continent had less participancy than her noble husband and herself. I was able to see but little of this excellent lady afterward; but I rejoice to learn from the lips of many who held familiar intercourse with her that, though daily and hourly enduring discomforts and privations such as war alone can inflict—though suffering under the tortures of a malady than which not one can be mentioned more painful and humiliating—though agonized with sights of desolation and anguish which it is not

in the power of human language to describe, she yet ever maintained a cheerful serenity of temper; was never heard to utter the language of complaint or of decrial; occupied herself night and day in deeds of charity and love, and up even to the end of that unhappy conflict so demeaned herself as to show that in all things she was just such a matron as either Greece or Rome would have been proud to recognize, and as *all America* might well admire and love.

Surely the day will come, and I must hope it is not now far distant, when all the virtues which adorn our noble countrymen and lend luster to American womanhood will be everywhere estimated at their true value; when all of heroism or of wisdom which belongs to the North, to the South, to the East, or to the West, in any part of our wide-extended empire, will be recognized as part and parcel of the "moral treasures of the country, and of the whole country;" when the sage and good of all the States into which our Republic is divided shall meet again as friends and brethren, as compatriots and co-inheritors of civil institutions so grand in their original structure and so happily amplified and ameliorated by the lessons of a sage experience as justly to command the homage and elicit the imitation of all the lovers of freedom to be found anywhere upon the planet which we occupy.

There are two remarkable facts in our recent history as a people, the consideration of which (in connection with the generous act of amnesty granted by Congress at the last session of that body, and the general amity and confraternity of feeling engendered thereby) has given me much of gratification and of encouragement as to the future of our country.

General Grant was called upon six years ago, in a man-

ner and under circumstances difficult to be resisted by any ordinary man, to cause Generals Lee and Joe Johnston to be arrested and tried for *treason*, despite the solemn *parol* which had been accorded to them, and in shameful disregard of the fidelity with which its conditions had been complied with. There were not a few then in whose bosoms revenge was rankling, and some even in high places were heard to cry aloud that the "time had come to make treason odious." What was the conduct of this great captain when thus called upon to do a deed of shame? He indignantly refused to be used as an instrument for the perpetration of such injustice and tyranny; and, with something of the stern and lofty virtue of an Aristides or a Cato, nobly risked his own official position upon the result; thereby, in my judgment, acquiring more of true glory than ever he had previously done in all the successful battles which he had fought in defense of the Constitution and the Union. Who has yet dared openly to censure General Grant for acting this noble part?

It is said that General Lee, only a few weeks before his lamented decease, was accosted by a maimed and tattered soldier near his own gate, who had fought on the side of the Government in the late unhappy war. The soldier was poor, diseased, and apparently friendless. The renowned Confederate commander heard the tale of sufferings of that unfortunate soldier with fixed attention, burst into tears, poured the sweet words of consolation and encouragement into his ears, and emptied the contents of his purse into his weak and trembling hands. Had all America been witness of this touching and impressive scene, where is the monster that would have presumed still to insist that discord should continue in the land of Washington, and that the rancors produced by this dire conflict should be yet prolonged by deeds of reciprocal unkindness?

REMINISCENCE No. III.

MR. CLAY—MR. POLK—MR. RITCHIE—GENERAL BAYLEY—BARGAIN, INTRIGUE, AND MANAGEMENT CHARGES—COMPROMISE MEASURES OF 1850—LYNN BOYD—GOVERNOR PRATT—MR. DICKINSON—MR. DAWSON.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, in one of the most striking numbers of the *Rambler*, insists that it is by no means so important that mankind should be the constant recipients of instruction absolutely new touching the manifold duties of life as it is that they should be from time to time reminded of moral obligations of which they may for some cause have become temporarily oblivious. Whether this renovation of early impressions shall be brought about by a bold and emphatic restatement of first principles in the abstract, or, in lieu thereof, the value of these first principles and the beneficial effects of faithfully observing them shall be made manifest by the seasonable citation of opposite examples, as well as by a statement of the deleterious consequences certain to flow from altogether disregarding or ignoring them, is, perhaps, a question which a mere Reminiscent of past occurrences is not in any way called upon to decide.

To proceed, then: I had frequently seen Mr. Clay, both before he became Secretary of State, in 1825, and afterward, but I had formed no particular personal acquaintance with him. I had never doubted his abilities, nor had I failed to give him credit for many high moral and intellectual qualities; but I had long regarded him as the most efficient champion and advocate of political opinions altogether repugnant to the creed of what was known as

the Democratic party, and I had, on that account, cherished strong prejudices toward him, and become deeply distrustful of his motives and purposes. How many thousands of our countrymen, under similar influences, have, in every stage of our history as a people, been unconsciously guilty of similar injustice! How often has the cause of free institutions suffered on this continent from the domination of extreme party zeal, in a thousand ways, since the days of the first inauguration of Washington! How ungenerously did the blind and infuriated zealots of faction accuse even the Father of his Country of being desirous of establishing an imperial despotism! How, in a similar manner, and with equal injustice, was Jackson arraigned by some of those who preferred the interests of party to the repose and well-being of the Republic!

Mr. Clay visited Washington city in the winter of 1847–'48. He stopped here for a few days only, on his way to Philadelphia. The Mexican war had been in progress for a year or two. Our armies had been signally successful, and General Scott was already in possession of Mexico. Our noble soldiers were dying by thousands upon a foreign soil. The public morals were obviously undergoing much deterioration, as the natural effect of a war of conquest. Other evils were at the moment plainly in view; evils which every sagacious mind saw must be speedily realized unless peace could be in some honorable manner restored. A treaty had just been made with the Mexican Government, and a copy of it had been received in Washington. Its various provisions were not precisely known at the time, and there was much speculation afloat in regard thereto. Mr. Polk's Cabinet were said to be at a stand upon the question whether or not this patriotic and excellent personage should send the treaty into the Senate for ratification. It was under these circumstances

that Mr. Clay, on the evening of his setting out for Philadelphia, visited the White House and asked an interview with Mr. Polk. It chanced that a company of gentlemen had been invited to dine with the President on that very evening. I had the honor to be of the party. When we were ushered into the reception room Mr. Clay was just taking his leave. So soon as he had made his exit Mr. Polk turned to us, with a bright smile of satisfaction upon his face, and said:

"Gentlemen, Mr. Clay has just surprised and gratified me very highly, and has proved to me that he is one of the most magnanimous and patriotic men living. He told me, in the interview that has this moment terminated, that he had been informed that a treaty with Mexico was in the Department of State, awaiting ratification, and that it was doubtful whether it would be sent to the Senate; that, from what he could learn of its provisions, he could not doubt that it was entitled to favorable consideration; that he was aware that in the present condition of parties there was some reason to dread that my administration would be bitterly assailed in several quarters, no matter what course I might pursue; but that he felt bound to say to me, ere he left Washington, that, should I conclude to give the country peace on the basis of the treaty, all the influence which he might possess would be openly and earnestly put in exercise in my behalf, and he was certain that his Whig friends, in Congress and out of it, would cheerfully act in this matter on his advice."

Mr. Polk, more than once on this occasion, strongly commended Mr. Clay's generous and manly conduct; and there is reason to believe that this unexpected guarantee of support had much influence in causing the treaty to be dispatched to the Senate for its approval, as in point of fact it was almost immediately after.

A year or two subsequent to this proceeding the country became fearfully convulsed by questions growing out of this same treaty. Two sectional parties, for the first time in the history of the Republic, were fiercely arrayed against each other, and no reasonable man could doubt

that civil war was imminent. Now it was that Mr. Clay left his own home, and resolved, though at the time in exceedingly feeble health, to risk his life in an effort to avert the dire consequences then menaced. The crisis which had arisen was indeed full of peril and difficulty. There were many conscientious men on both sides who felt bound to keep up the warfare then in progress. There were numerous local demagogues, also, on either side, resolved to keep up agitation for their own individual benefit. There was no man in either house of Congress who was prepared to take the lead in bringing forward a plan of national pacification, and who, at the same time, could be considered to possess sufficient weight and influence in all sections of the Union to secure general acquiescence in it. Mr. Clay was yet reverenced by the Whig masses all over the land. He was a considerable slaveholder, but yet had been known for several years to be in favor of a system of gradual emancipation. He had had no hand in bringing on the war with Mexico, but after it had been declared he had been an earnest and efficient supporter of it, and had lost a favorite son in one of the battles which had occurred in the course of its prosecution. He was fearless, sagacious, and eloquent, and was known to be endowed in an eminent degree with all the qualities necessary to successful political leadership at such a moment as had then been reached. The result of his wondrous exertions has been long known to the world, but there are some particulars connected with the history of this trying period which may not now be distinctly remembered by all, and liberal minded men will, I am sure, excuse me if I dwell somewhat longer than I should otherwise do upon the merits of a man who has of late been assailed in a wanton and unpardonable manner by more than one of those who will certainly not be regarded

by an unbiased posterity as even worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of the great and good man whom they have dared to calumniate so cruelly after his consignment to the tomb.

There are two or three anecdotes connected with this period of Mr. Clay's history which I will here recite. It is known that in the columns of the Richmond *Enquirer*—a paper of great and deserved influence, and which was edited for many years by the celebrated Thomas Ritchie—much prominence had been given to the memorable "Bargain and Intrigue" scandal, which had been hatched into existence during the winter of 1825, and which in its day had been exceedingly potential in separating good citizens from each other, as well as in bringing undeserved opprobrium upon some of the brightest public names in America. Mr. Ritchie's own high character, both as a gentleman and journalist, had lent much dignity to accusations which, perhaps, but for his support of them, would have become extinct almost in the very moment of their first promulgation. Mr. Clay and Mr. Ritchie had played together in boyhood, and had maintained relations of close amity and kindness for many years of their early manhood. I have repeatedly heard from Mr. Clay's own lips that the circumstance of their former friendship had rendered Mr. Ritchie's decrial of him peculiarly galling. The two ancient friends had now become bitter and apparently irreconcilable enemies.

The condition of public affairs in 1850 was such as to bring these pure-minded and disinterested patriots naturally into the same train of thought and sentiment. Both of them intensely loved the American Union. Neither of them had ever given even temporary sanction to the absurd and perilous dogmas of nullification and secession. The questions which had so long arrayed them against

each other as prominent members of two opposing political parties had been for the most part disposed of. The Whig party, one of the most enlightened, patriotic, and truly conservative organizations ever known in this country, was evidently preparing to retire gracefully from the field, having performed its particular mission, and having no such insane love of official patronage as could prompt it to keep up a useless and mischievous struggle, in which the real peace and welfare of the Republic could not be at all involved. The conflict between the two bodies of sectional extremists already referred to was at its height. The Republic was, in truth, tottering upon the foundations which the sage and incorruptible statesmen of a former generation had established. It was not for such men as Henry Clay and Thomas Ritchie to think of securing party ascendency or individual advancement whilst demagogues of varied stamp and complexion were, under plausible pretexts, plotting the ruin of the sacred edifice of liberty itself. It was under such circumstances as these that Mr. Ritchie came to me one morning, a few weeks after Mr. Clay had reached Washington, in company with General Bayley, of Virginia, and urged that we two should call upon Mr. Clay and ask him to offer a resolution in the Senate for the raising of a committee of thirteen, through the instrumentality of which he thought that the great and alarming differences then existing might be reconciled, and general national brotherhood be re-established. Mr. Ritchie went further in this conference, and declared the opinion, which he entertained, that no man in the Republic could as successfully take the lead in the needed work of pacification as Mr. Clay. In the most touching and impressive manner he gave utterance to the regret which he felt that facts connected with contests for party ascendency in former days should so far

have estranged Mr. Clay and himself from each other that he could not take the liberty of calling upon him in person and conferring with him in regard to the means of averting the catastrophe obviously menaced. Mr. Ritchie, in addition, authorized us to give in his name to Mr. Clay a most explicit pledge that, should he conclude to adopt the course thus indicated, he would support him to the utmost in the widely-circulated newspaper he was then editing. General Bayley and myself called that very evening upon Mr. Clay in his parlor at the National Hotel. He met us in the most gracious and cordial manner, and received with evident pleasure the communication with which we had been intrusted by Mr. Ritchie. He declared his warm approval of the plan of operation suggested by that gentleman, but stated that, for various reasons of a very peculiar and delicate character, he would prefer that the resolution proposing the committee of thirteen should be brought forward in the Senate by some other individual. I afterward agreed to offer it, on the express condition that I should not be made one of its members, and that Mr. Clay himself should consent to preside over its deliberations. No one will be surprised to learn that, in a day or two after, Mr. Clay and Mr. Ritchie met, became cordially reconciled to each other, and consulted together often in the most fraternal manner at every stage of the great struggle which at last resulted in the adoption of the Compromise enactments of 1850. Before this consummation had crowned the efforts of Mr. Clay and his Union friends, on a very warm day in midsummer, a very large party of Congressional gentlemen was convened at the hospitable mansion of Mr. Sullivan, of this city, a man universally beloved and esteemed, for the purpose of enjoying a dinner good enough, indeed, to be set before princes and nobles. Mr. Clay was one of the invited guests, as

was also Mr. Ritchie. They sat upon opposite sides of the table. Mr. Clay was in his happiest conversational mood, and poured forth many a choice anecdote concerning the scenes of public life through which he had passed. It was but natural that all present should wish to hear him say something touching the Compromise struggle then going on, and the chances of accomplishing the object which all of us had so much at heart; and an effort, therefore, was made to call him out thereupon. He talked upon this subject for some time, with even more than his accustomed eloquence, when suddenly his mercurial and impulsive friend of "Auld Lang Syne" rose from his seat and exclaimed: "Look here, Mr. Clay, if you will really save the Union, we will all forgive you for having had Adams elected in 1825 by '*bargain, intrigue, and management.*'" "Shut your mouth!" exclaimed Mr. Clay, in response; shut your mouth, Tom Ritchie; you know perfectly well that there never was a word of truth in that charge." "Very well, very well," smilingly responded Mr. Ritchie; "I say to you now, in hearing of this goodly company, that if you succeed in rescuing the Republic from ruin, and I should survive you, Tom Ritchie will plant a sprig of laurel upon your grave."

I should not omit to mention here that Mr. Clay, a few minutes after this pleasant badinage between himself and Mr. Ritchie, in a very solemn and formal manner, addressed the company substantially as follows: "Gentlemen, I feel it to be due to such an occasion as the present one to make a frank confession. Though I have never doubted the propriety of my own conduct, in voting for Mr. Adams myself in 1825 and advising my friends to vote for him, yet, were I to live this part of my public life over again, I should not deem it judicious to accept at his hands the Secretaryship of State. By doing so I

injured both him and myself; I placed myself in a false position before the country, and often have I painfully felt that I had seriously impaired my own capacity for public usefulness."

Another incident, having much affinity with the one just recited, I shall now recount. Lynn Boyd, of Kentucky, is well known to thousands to have been a respectable and efficient Representative in Congress from the State of Kentucky. He was a zealous Democratic partisan, and had commenced his long public career as an ardent supporter of General Jackson. Mr. Boyd was a thoroughgoing party man at that period of his life, but he was, notwithstanding, an upright and manly gentleman. He was an active and efficient supporter of the "Bargain, Intrigue, and Management" accusation, and his great popularity in the district which he so long represented in Congress was said to be greatly owing to his pursuing this course. He had brought himself in process of time to distrust Mr. Clay very deeply, and even to entertain feelings for him of a most unfriendly character. It happened that Boyd had always been a great devotee to the Union cause, and had no more sympathy with secessionists and nullifiers than Jackson himself had. He had been a diligent observer of Mr. Clay's manly and statesmanlike course in 1850, and had learned to honor and to love him. One morning he came into my room at the boarding-house where we were both sojourning, and commissioned me to go in his behalf to Mr. Clay, and say that he heartily regretted that he had ever called his integrity or patriotism in question, and hoped that he would grant him an early interview, for he wished to confer with him freely upon the momentous questions then pending. I undertook this honorable mission with more than pleasure. I was authorized by Mr. Clay to invite Colonel

Boyd to his room, as I did, and soon had the satisfaction of witnessing a meeting between them entirely creditable to both parties. One or two years thereafter Mr. Boyd was a candidate for re-election to Congress in his old district, and some of those opposed to his election endeavored to defeat him by reminding the friends and admirers of Mr. Clay of Boyd's former hostility to him. This gentleman addressed me a letter at the time, asking my testimony touching the facts above stated. This was of course most cheerfully given, and I had the gratification of afterward learning that Boyd's success in the contest was in part owing to the letter which I had written to him on this subject, and which had been published and circulated very freely in the district.

It was during this same eventful summer that my friend and early schoolmate, Senator Pratt, of Maryland, invited Mr. Clay and several other gentlemen to visit him at Annapolis and spend a day or two with him and his charming family at their hospitable mansion. Not one of those who had been thus summoned refused the proffered honor, and I well remember the delightful scenes through which we there passed, and in which Mr. Clay talked more freely than I ever knew him to do, displaying colloquial powers such as to me were, I confess, alike surprising and captivating. One morning he was invited to visit the Capitol, at Annapolis, where the old Congress were sitting at the time that General Washington surrendered his sword to that body, and returned to private life. The invitation was, of course, accepted, and he set off on foot for that venerable hall, accompanied by his friends, including, as I recollect, Mr. Dickinson, of New York; Mr. Dawson, of Georgia, and others. When we reached our place of destination we found ourselves quickly surrounded by a considerable concourse of citizens. Mr. Clay, on getting

within that room where the Revolutionary Congress held its immortal deliberations, asked that some one would point out to him the precise spot where Washington stood when the scene just referred to had its progress. When this was done he walked to it, and, gazing toward the chair of the presiding officer of that body, he raised his right hand, obviously in imitation of the Father of his Country when giving this last and crowning proof of his fidelity to the cause of which he had been for so many years the honored champion and defender. Mr. Clay was evidently conscious of a peculiar inspiration at that interesting moment. His face was radiant with pure and lofty emotion. His eyes blazed with excitement. His noble form seemed absolutely to swell beyond its natural dimensions. The crowd was overwhelmingly impressed, and vociferously exclaimed, "A speech! A speech!" Thus called upon, Mr. Clay proceeded to address those assembled, for a few moments, and in his most happy manner. He rapidly reviewed the existing condition of the country, pointed out the evils of sectional jealousy and extreme party prejudice, spoke of the value of the Constitution and the Union, referred to the noble example of Washington and his compeers of the Revolutionary era, and concluded in these words:

"However others may act, I am firmly resolved henceforward to hold no political fellowsh p with any man or set of men who do not love their country more than party, and who are not willing to make any sacrifice and incur any hazard for the maintenance of the Union of these States and the institutions of freedom established by our forefathers."

I have only to add that had there been one such man in the Congress of the United States as Henry Clay in 1860–'61 there would, I feel sure, have been no civil war. Had Mr. Clay himself been then living, the same high

toned patriotism and consummate statesmanship which had been so efficiently instrumental in 1819, in 1832, and in 1850, in preserving the Republic from the horrors of civil butchery, and from the yet greater evils sure to result from disunion, whenever that shall be effected, would have been seen to achieve a still grander triumph of principle over the embodied factionists of that period, from whose ill counsels such unmeasured evils have been seen to flow.

REMINISCENCE No. IV.

GENERAL HAYNE—MR. WEBSTER—GENERAL JACKSON—MICAJAH TARVER—WILEY CONNER.

It chanced that the once famous General Hayne, of South Carolina, visited the State of Mississippi in the winter of 1838 and 1839. He came to the Southwest on a most important expedition. He wished to call public attention to the scheme, which had been a short time before projected, of connecting the city of Memphis with Charleston by railway—about twelve years before the very first railway ever constructed west of the Alleghany was commenced. This was to extend from the head to the foot of the Muscle shoals of the Tennessee river. The first meeting held for the consideration of this project took place in my professional office, in the town of Tuscumbia, where I then resided, and the well-known and truly meritorious Micajah Tarver presided on the occasion. A large subscription for stock was immediately taken up, and I had the honor of being appointed to draw up a petition to the Alabama Legislature for a charter of the company about to be formed, as well as to frame the charter itself, which double task I performed with more than ordinary pleasure. A very enterprising and worthy man, Colonel David Deshler, then a merchant of Tuscumbia, I recollect, brought on from New York, a short time before, a wooden railway model, which he exhibited to the meeting above alluded to, and made a most masterly explanation of the *modus operandi* of this new vehicle of commerce and travel. Colonel Deshler was father to the General Deshler who distinguished himself so much in the

recent unhappy civil war. The Colonel died about two years since in Tuscumbia, leaving behind him, as I understand, a very large estate. The railway from the head to the foot of the Muscle shoals proved decidedly a losing concern. Many of the original stockholders were subjected to great pecuniary losses thereby, and but for the purchase of this railway afterward by the Memphis and Charleston Company, afterward established, it would doubtless long since have been abandoned. General Hayne had visited Nashville and several other places of note before he reached Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, and had everywhere upon his route awakened much interest in the great undertaking of which he was such an eloquent and effective champion. The Legislature of Mississippi was in session when he arrived, and a committee of three was appointed by that body to call upon him at his lodgings and invite him to address the Senate and House of Representatives then in joint session. This committee, of which I had the honor to be a member, lost no time in the performance of the honorable duty assigned them, and, having escorted this distinguished personage to the capitol, General Hayne proceeded to address the large concourse assembled in a manner so impressive and captivating that I am sure no one who was then present has ever ceased since to look back to that occasion with feelings of unqualified satisfaction and delight.

General Hayne was of medium stature, well shaped, and of a singularly animated and mercurial aspect. His eyes were very bright and dazzling, and of a light hazel color. His countenance wore a very mild and benignant expression. His face was cleanly shaven, and he was elegantly but unostentatiously attired. His manners were marked with a graceful and winning affability which I have never seen surpassed When he mounted the stand

to address the audience, and for a moment stood quietly surveying the ladies and gentlemen assembled, he seemed at once to awaken a sympathy in all hearts, and to enkindle a lively curiosity, also, to hear all he had to say. I had myself feared that the topics which he had to discuss, being chiefly those of mere economic detail, his powers as an orator would find no sufficient scope for their display, and that he might occasionally prove dry and uninteresting in the presentation of some of the matters to which he was seeking to attract public regard. But never did I make a greater mistake. The address, though of considerable length, was accompanied with such extraordinary charmfulness of delivery that no one could possibly have grown tired of listening to it, and I am confident that all who drank in his soft, mellifluous tones, and beheld his manly and impressive gesticulation, would have felt grateful to him had he continued his discourse for full two hours longer. I had heard a great deal before thus meeting General Hayne of the attractiveness of his voice and manner, but no description which I had before received of him at all came up to the splendid reality of which I was now a delighted witness. When the committee escorted him back to his room, I took the liberty of asking him to tell me how he had been able to acquire such wondrous facility of expression, and such remarkable capacity for keeping alive the interest of his audience. He answered my queries without any false modesty, and without a particle of vulgar egotism, very nearly in these words:

"You give me credit for much facility of expression, and for having successfully cultivated to some extent the graces of rhetorical display. I shall surprise you, I do not doubt, when I tell you that at sixteen years of age I was an awkward stammering boy. I desired to become a lawyer, and was even then assiduously preparing myself for the legal profession. A youth more ambitious of oratorical distinction

than I was I am sure has never lived. But my friends and relatives all joined in urging me to give up the hope of future renown as a speaker and to devote myself to some other calling better adapted to the slenderness of my faculties. They told me that it was absurd and ridiculous in one who stuttered so abominably to think of becoming even a tolerable pleader of causes. This mortified me much, but I did not desist from the struggle in which I had so zealously enlisted. I thought much of the difficulties of a similar kind which Demosthenes was reported to have encountered, and of the successful efforts made by him to overcome them. I diligently studied the tones of my own voice. I essayed to find out all the mysteries which belonged to our complex vocal organ. I labored from hour to hour, and from minute to minute, to ascertain the precise nature of those particular impediments to a clear and easy articulation under which I was suffering. I pondered this subject by day, and it was with me the prompter of many a painful and of many a pleasing dream. At length the light broke in upon me. I found that I had never before learned to talk; that I had been suffered all my life to jabber confused and unintelligible sounds. I learned at last that to speak, in the true sense of the word, was to articulate distinct vocables; that the ardor of my temperament was such, as well as my ambition, to communicate ideas to the minds of others, that I had heretofore unduly hurried my syllables upon each other, or rather tried to do so, so that the vocal sounds became inextricably intermingled and hopelessly indistinct, and that every fresh effort had involved me in greater and greater embarrassments. I came at last to the conclusion that the first step I had to take in order to acquire the complete control of my voice was to put my own feelings under the strictest discipline, to habituate myself to sober thought, and to learn the indispensable art of keeping the fervent sensibilities with which I was endowed under thorough command, and that after I had done these things in an effectual manner it would then be indispensable that I should strive to enunciate each syllable that I had to utter clearly and emphatically before attempting to emit a succeeding one, and so on until the whole sentence, whether long or short, should have passed forth from my lips. By pursuing this course rigidly for a considerable period of time, I hoped that at last I might accomplish the great object which I was seeking to attain, and that I should become able to speak fluently and without pain either to myself or to others. I practiced constantly upon these ideas, and if I now speak with ease, as you seem to think, I am indebted for my power in this respect to the labors which I have just described. This is so certainly the case that I assure you were I even now to attempt to express myself in the rapid manner which has be-

come so common of late among young men of fiery temperament and of unchastened moral organism, I should inevitably stutter just as disgustingly as I did forty years ago."

After this interesting recital had closed I ventured to refer to the great oratorical contest between himself and Mr. Webster, in the National Senate, now nearly a half century ago, and asked him what he thought of Mr. Webster's powers as a speaker. He at once answered that he supposed him, upon the whole, to be the most consummate orator of either ancient or modern times; that his ability as a reasoner, he was confident, had never been exceeded; that his imagination was as fertile and vigorous as that of Milton or Homer; that his humor was both exquisite and abundant; that his knowledge was unlimited; that he had the most happy command of his temper at all times, and that on certain great occasions he had excelled all the speakers that had ever lived, not excepting either Demosthenes or Cicero. I then asked him what he thought of Mr. Webster's *manner*. He replied that it was always grand and impressive; that he had never heard him utter a word in a careless or vulgar style; that he seemed never to forget his own dignity, or to be unmindful of the character and feelings of others; and that when thoroughly excited the sublime grandeur of his thoughts and language derived great additional potency from his noble and soul-moving enunciation and his few but impressive gestures. I then said to him: "But, General Hayne, every one in the South admired your speeches on the occasion to which you have been referring more than they did those of Mr. Webster, and it is said that General Jackson was so much delighted with the first of your speeches in the Senate that he had it printed on satin for distribution among his friends at a distance. Was this so?" To which he replied: "I believe this to have been

true; the people of the South generally approved my speech because they believed that I had been defending in it their own local interests and honor. General Jackson admired it because he thought I had successfully vindicated the Democratic cause, to the support of which his own life had been devoted. But you know that in a few months thereafter, when our nullification experiment had developed its gigantic proportions, and after the memorable contest had occurred in the Senate between Mr. Calhoun and my ancient antagonist Mr. Webster, General Jackson became so great an admirer of the Senator from Massachusetts that he thought seriously of making him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States upon the decease of the venerated Marshall. Be assured, sir," he continued, "I never for one moment have thought of comparing that oration of mine, made in direct assailment of Mr. Webster and the Federal party of old, and to the defense of which I had thought proper to challenge him, to his great and unequaled speech in reply thereto; though it is certain that, for a day or two, it seemed to many that I had come off victor in the contest."

While General Hayne thus generously expressed himself, I could not help recurring to the celebrated contest between Demosthenes and Eschines, so familiar to all, the latter of whom, when driven into banishment by the superior eloquence of his great rival, is reported to have established a school of rhetoric at Rhodes, where, on one occasion, when he had been declaiming in the hearing of his pupils that very speech of Demosthenes which had consigned himself to exile, upon their expressing to him their warm admiration of it as a specimen of oratorical power, he magnanimously exclaimed: "If you are pleased with this speech when only hearing it recited by me, how much more warmly you would have approved it had you heard it thundered forth by Demosthenes himself!"

Having referred to the railway between the head and foot of the Muscle shoals of the Tennessee river, and having incidentally mentioned that its construction brought serious pecuniary losses upon many of those who had participated therein, I am tempted to relate an anecdote or two somewhat germain to the matters already discussed, and which may a little compensate for the dullness of much of that which has been already here written.

At the time that this same railway was projected there was a newspaper then published in the town of Courtland, in North Alabama, by a good and worthy citizen called Wiley Conner. This paper was called the Courtland *Herald*, and below these words every day came forth, in freshly printed characters, a well-known couplet from Cowper's "Task," descriptive of the English postboy:

> "Here comes the herald of a noisy world,
> News from all nations lumbering at his back."

I deemed it expedient to get Conner to publish a series of articles in his paper in support of the railway project, and as he had not made himself well acquainted with the subject I wrote most of the first articles published myself. He then kept up the fire very handsomely, indeed, for some time, and did, I do not doubt, a good deal, in one way or other, to further the cause he had so much at heart. I well recollect that in one of the numbers of his remarkable gazette he went far toward demonstrating that the wood of the cedar tree, so well adapted to railway purposes, was far more lasting than copper.

Removing from Alabama a year or two after, I had no occasion to visit Courtland again until the year 1836. I then found the village in a greatly dilapidated condition. It did not seem to me altogether proper that I should leave town without calling to inquire after my ancient friend, so I went in the direction of the house within

which the Courtland *Herald* had been printed in former days; but what was my surprise, on entering the portals of that edifice, to find scattered about the floor of the ante-room large masses of type, and on penetrating the room where I had held so many grave consultations of yore upon questions of almost all grades and complexions, lo! I beheld an aged gentleman, with spectacles on nose, in a broiling summer's day, sitting up, with his feet stuck under his posteriors, apparently sewing for his life, while the perspiration was pouring from his brows in the most copious streams. So soon as I could get myself recognized, I exclaimed: "Good heavens! Mr. Conner, what are you doing? and what has become of the Courtland *Herald?*"

To which he responded, in most lugubrious tones:

"Oh, my dear friend, you have ruined me! You persuaded me, nine years ago, to devote my columns to the establishment of the railway that runs through this now wasted and depopulated village. As soon as the accursed railway got into operation, it drew off all the trade from Courtland to other more commercial points, destroyed the value of my little property here, and, as it was quite as convenient for my neighbors in Courtland to subscribe for newpapers printed elsewhere, and of larger dimensions, and to print their advertisements therein also, why, you see, they all abandoned me, left the poor Courtland *Herald* high and dry, and drove me back to my original vocation, in which you now see me engaged."

I was really distressed in mind at seeing the condition of this public-spirited editor, and after offering him what consolation I could, I invited him to remove, bag and baggage, to the State of Mississippi; which, on doing, he soon became restored to his former comfortable and prosperous circumstances.

Wiley Conner was in some particulars certainly quite a remarkable man. He was in person about five feet two inches in height, of a fresh and rubicund countenance; had what Shakspeare calls "a fair, round belly," which

was doubtless, too, often "with good capon lined;" with legs ludicrously short in proportion to the longitude of his body; and having a long and fine suit of curling hair, plaited up carefully, and attached to the apex of his bullet-shaped cranium with a large horn comb. Having no beard on his face, and having never married, these circumstances, together with that of his ringlets being kept in place by means of the pectinal appendage already mentioned, induced some of his cotemporary brothers of the quill, when he did anything which gave them special offense, to dub him "Madame Conner," by which appellation he was, in fact, generally distinguished, save by those who chose, from a consideration of the peculiar manner in which he was accustomed to waddle about the streets, to call him the "yam potato."

Though Conner was no statesman, and did not pretend to see very deeply into futurity in regard to the rise and fall of political parties, yet he was, perhaps, one of the most faithful chroniclers of the weather that the Tennessee valley has ever boasted, for never did a huge snow fall that he did not instantly record the fact in his immortal columns; if the weather was very cold he did not fail to note that important occurrence; if it was very hot he did the self-same thing; if a deluging rain caused Big Nance (the creek that held the village of Courtland in its watery embrace) to overflow and sweep away the neighboring fences, he was all in a pucker of dissatisfaction; and whenever the exsiccating rays of a summer's sun threatened to dry up the precious streamlet he did not fail to write article after article intended to prompt his sluggish neighbors to stop as soon as possible the subterraneous outlet which he asserted was constantly draining off the waters of this second Scamander into the bed of the Tennessee river.

Never did this once-famed editorial monitor suffer a marriage to take place or a noted death to occur without saying something in the *Herald* thereupon, either wise or witty, commendatory or humorous. He proposed to make the *Evening Star*, of New York, his model, and often have I seen him weep with ecstasy over articles written, as he said, "in the Mordecai Noah style," and which it hugely delighted him to read aloud whenever he could get around him a company of willing listeners. His last exploit in this line which I now recollect was as follows: A most venerable citizen, by the name of Harper, told Conner, on a certain Friday morning, that he was about to be married to a most charming widow in a neighboring village. The marriage was to come off that very evening. Conner announced the marriage in his paper next morning in a very flourishing and imposing manner. The expected groom attended a great muster on Saturday, when his acquaintances all came forward to congratulate him upon the fortunate connubial alliance he had just effected. Now, unfortunately, this same marriage had not taken place as expected, some terms of settlement being insisted upon by the friends of the lady, to which the aged candidate for matrimony could not be induced to accede. Harper, in order to save himself from further congratulation over an incident of good fortune which, in point of fact, had not been realized, flew to Conner and required a contradiction to be made of his former publication. This Conner could not in justice refuse to do, but being a veritable wit, and somewhat of a wag with all, he accompanied the correction with a number of over-savory Scotch anecdotes of a strictly illustrative character, and made the desired publication under the significant caption of "A Flash in the Pan!" Upon this the friends of the lady grew furious, and justly so; and one of them, a gentleman of

much refinement and chivalry, who was, by-the-by, very well known to me personally, dashed up to the town of Courtland for the purpose of bringing Conner to immediate responsibility. Conner, hearing of his arrival at the hotel, and divining his intention, plunged into the somber depths of his cellar, where he remained safely esconced until informed, as he was in a few days, that the coast was clear. He got out just in time to announce the marriage of Harper to another lady of much more suitable age, of which he made due notification in the *Herald*, under the very appropriate heading, "No Flash this Time!"

REMINISCENCE V.

GENERAL JAMES HAMILTON—MR. CALHOUN—GOVERNOR QUITMAN—JEFF. DAVIS—GENERAL LAMAR—PRESIDENT BURNETT—NICHOLAS BIDDLE—COLONEL WHITE.

I have heretofore made mention of a distinguished chief of the extreme States school of South Carolina, General Robert Y. Hayne. I shall now briefly notice another gentleman of the same political class, General James Hamilton. This latter gentleman I knew well, and with him had much familiar intercourse for more than twenty years. General Hamilton is known to have sprung from a family of great respectability, and very early in life to have established a high reputation for courage, generosity, and all the more heroic virtues. He was for several years during the days of his young and lusty manhood in the United States army. He resigned his military commission, as I have understood, a short time subsequent to his marriage, and retired to the large estate acquired with his wife, where, for some years, he gave evidence of many high qualities, both of head and heart, and was afterward elected to a seat in the popular branch of Congress, where he ultimately attained considerable distinction. He delivered in that body a number of brilliant and effective speeches, which attracted at the time much public notice. He took a very conspicuous position in the nullification struggle of 1832, and if war between the General Government and South Carolina had then occurred, it is well understood that the extremists of South Carolina would greatly have relied for their defense, against an invading Federal force, upon the military experience of General

Hamilton, his indomitable fearlessness, and his remarkable capacity for managing and controlling men. It is fortunate for the people of South Carolina, and for the fame of their honored executive chief at that trying moment, that the menaced collision was averted, and that the shedding of American blood upon American soil, by the fratricidal hands of armed American soldiers, was postponed for nearly thirty years. General Hamilton is known by others as well as by myself to have afterward become far more conservative in his opinions and sentiments, and in the crisis of 1850 he both wrote and counseled zealously and efficiently in the interests of peace and concord. I had myself a long and formal interview with him, in 1850, on Capitol Hill, in this city, some weeks subsequent to Mr. Calhoun's lamented decease, and I can say with truth that from no man did I receive higher evidences of sympathy in the attitude which I then occupied, and that from the lips of no man did I obtain wiser and more wholesome admonition. I well remember that General Hamilton, in the autumn of that very year, published a letter in which he emphatically asserted that Mr. Calhoun, if he had lived long enough to behold the perilous crisis of 1851, would not have been found supporting the reckless and dangerous policy of Mr. Davis and Mr. Quitman in Mississippi, and that of Mr. McDonald and others in Georgia, all of whom were then struggling to unite all the States of the South in the *co-operative* movement, as it was called, which had been boldly initiated in South Carolina, and which looked directly to *disunion*, in case the compromise measures of that period should be persevered in by the Government of the Union.

I was first introduced to General Hamilton in the spring of 1839, in the city of Houston, which was then the Texan capital, whither I had gone on a mingled trip of pleas-

ure and business. The affairs of Texas were then in a feeble and tottering condition. To be sure, the battle of San Jacinto had been fought, and immortal glory had been acquired by the seven or eight hundred gallant men who there defeated Santa Anna and his numerous army of disciplined Mexican troops; but Texas was still menaced with invasion by Mexico. She was yet exceedingly deficient in moneyed resources, and the established governments of the earth seemed reluctant to give her recognition as a sovereign and independent Power. General Sam Houston had now been succeeded in the office of President by General Mirabeau B. Lamar, who had called around him a safe and trustworthy Cabinet, all of whom were personally known to me, and greatly respected. Judge Burnett was Secretary of State, General Johnson was Secretary of War, General Richard C. Dunlap was Secretary of the Treasury, and General Memucan Hunt was Secretary of the Navy. A day or two after my arrival at the Texan capital, General Hamilton reached that place, also, in company with ex-Governor Butler, of South Carolina, and Colonel White, late of Florida, but then a resident of New Orleans. General Hamilton had been employed by the Texan government to conduct certain fiscal negotiations in its behalf, in which it was understood that he had been eminently successful. He was invited to a noble banquet immediately on his arrival, which was served up to a numerous concourse of congenial and accomplished guests in the lower rooms of the large building in Houston then used as a State-house. A merrier or more agreeable party I never witnessed. General Hamilton, on being toasted, delivered a most interesting and encouraging address, and other gentlemen spoke also, who were, apparently, listened to with much attention and pleasure. Several other dinners were afterward given to

General Hamilton and the friends who had accompanied him to Texas, at which I had the honor to be present, and where I met many gentlemen not unknown to fame, among whom I can not refrain from mentioning specially here, General Thomas J. Rusk, afterward so prominent and useful as a member of the national Senate. I hope not to incur the charge of egotism by mentioning that while sojourning there for a few days at the Texan capitol, I had the honor to be invited, by President Lamar and his Cabinet, to write the history of the Texan struggle for independence, the materials for which work I collected within the next six months, and the volumes containing which I completed in about six months more. The subject was, indeed, one of deep interest; the materials supplied me by public spirited citizens of Texas were both rich and abundant; but the book itself, written in great haste, and amid numerous other absorbing and perplexing avocations, I have long recognized in point of literary execution as exceedingly imperfect. The chief honor heretofore conferred upon my poor volumes consists in the fact that "Texas and the Texans; or, The Advance of the Anglo-Americans to the far Southwest," had the fortune to be freely cited a few years after its appearance by Judge Woodbury, and other members of the American Senate, as unquestionable historic authority during the discussion of the grave and deeply interesting question, whether the "Single-Starred Republic" should be admitted into the Federal Union.

I may as well observe here that while I was remaining in Philadelphia, during the winter of 1840–'41, for the purpose of superintending the publication of this work, I met with many excellent and accomplished gentlemen, who have been ever since retained by me in respectful and affectionate memory, among whom I should not omit

to mention specially George M. Dallas, Charles J. and Joseph R. Ingersoll, Mr. Rush, the former Secretary of the Treasury under Mr. Adams, and afterward Minister Plenipotentiary to England; the celebrated Dr. Chapman, a native of my own native county of Virginia; Dr. Dunglison, Dr. Mitchell, John Paul Brown, Commodore Biddle, Mr. Edward A. Ingraham, and Nicholas Biddle. In reference to the latter gentleman I will here offer a few brief remarks. I saw him now for the first time, and under decidedly unfavorable circumstances. His bank, or rather the United States Bank of Pennsylvania, had just failed; in fact, it suspended payment on the day of my arrival in Philadelphia. Popular excitement against him and his bank was running very high, and his life was even said to be in danger. Still he walked about the streets of the Quaker City calm and composed, and did not seem in the least degree to quail before the tempest which was raging round him. He attended the Wistar parties regularly, and "his face belied him if his soul was sad." He visited me cordially at the boarding-house where I was staying, and I saw him repeatedly at his own hospitable mansion and elsewhere. He was certainly a man of very intellectual appearance and of the utmost refinement of manners. His conversational powers were very extraordinary, and he uniformly talked with me in a frank, unreserved, and entertaining manner. He was aware that I had written the volumes then emanating from the press chiefly with a view of expediting, as far as I could, the admission of Texas, of which measure he was an ardent advocate. In the appendix to "Texas and the Texans" will be found a valuable and instructive correspondence between Mr. Biddle and Mr. Jaudon, his fiscal agent abroad, in which the question of Texan admission is discussed most ably. This correspondence was politely handed to me by Mr. Biddle for publication.

Nicholas Biddle was truly a man of most liberal and enlightened views. He did not at all doubt that in coming time, and perhaps in a very few years, all the North American continent, including the islands which bespangle the surface of the Mexican gulf, would be brought under the wise and beneficent protection of the "Stars and Stripes." He advocated most earnestly the immediate admission of Texas, and contended, as I thought at the time and still think, with irresistible cogency, that the fabric of the Union would grow stronger and stronger in proportion as the local governmental props placed under it for its support should be multiplied. He freely ridiculed the idea that Texas was too distant from Washington to be conveniently controlled and regulated by the central department of our governmental system, maintaining that the most remote position of this delightful region was, for all practical purposes, as near to Washington then, by reason of the improved facilities for travel, as Massachusetts had been to Philadelphia in the days of his own boyhood. In illustration of this view of the matter he related a short but striking anecdote. He said that he remembered that John Adams, then either President or Vice President, reached his father's house in Philadelphia just before the commencement of the session of Congress, and that he remarked pleasantly to his host that he supposed that he had himself just made the journey from Quincy, in the neighborhood of Boston, to Philadelphia in less time than any public man had ever before done: "for," said he, "I have performed this trip in seventeen days, all the while traveling in my sulky." Mr. Biddle seemed much grieved and astonished that any one should doubt the expediency of our acquiring as early as we honorably and safely could Cuba, San Domingo, Jamaica, Porto Rico, and all the adjacent isles, alleging, as I thought, with great force, that until the Mexican gulf

should be made our *Mare clausum* all the commerce of the Western States and Territories, floating down the Mississippi and its tributaries, would be constantly exposed to foreign molestation.

I do not doubt that from these interviews with Mr. Biddle I derived certain views expressed by me in the national Senate, in the winter of 1847–'48, when I contended that, having at that time made a complete conquest of Mexico—holding even her capital then in our hands—instead of aiming to make a treaty with any of the disorderly and lawless factions then warring on Mexican soil for ascendency, we should at once proceed to proclaim the fact that the Republic of Mexico had drawn to an end, and then go on without delay to Americanize the whole of this fair and inviting region by permeating it in every direction with railways, establishing post offices and post roads over its whole surface, and opening it, on the most liberal and inviting terms, to enterprising settlers from our own country.

We left General Hamilton, Colonel White, and others at the Texan capital. There they only staid a few days more, when some fifteen or twenty of us set sail from the port of Galveston to New Orleans. We traveled in a steamship which had been recently purchased by General Hamilton for the Texan Government, and in which he had just before navigated the stormy waves of the bay rolling between Galveston and the mouth of the Mississippi river. This vessel had been called the Charleston. General Hamilton, whilst we were returning on it, one day at dinner, over several bottles of excellent Madeira, christened it anew by the name of the Zavallo, in honor of a Mexican chief of that name very favorably known as a friend of Texas in her late struggle for independence. Some fifteen years after this General Hamilton was

wrecked on board a steamship bound from Galveston to Berwick's bay, and thus ended the varied and romantic career of a warm-hearted, enterprising, and truly chivalrous Southern gentlemen.

There is one other particular which I should here notice in connection with this same trip to Texas. I found on my arrival there a French count, by the name of Saligny, or De Saligny. He was a guest of my friend General Hunt during my own stay at his house, and was a very handsome little fellow; indeed, he was thought by some to resemble the portraits of the first Napoleon. An *on dit*, too, prevailed that he had distinguished himself a good deal during those fierce conflicts which raised Louis Philippe to the French throne. He had been secretary of legation *en attendant* to M. Sartiges at Washington, and had been sent to Texas, as he said, by the French Government to inspect the condition of that young Republic. The Texan President, whilst I was at Houston, was examining into the expediency of sending Colonel White as an accredited minister of Texas to France; and this appointment Colonel White would certainly have received but for the sudden and somewhat abrupt interposition of the Count de Saligny, who represented that the gentleman named would not be acceptable as Envoy to his royal master. The vivacious French count traveled to New Orleans in company with Colonel White, General Hamilton, and others, including myself, and he and I had the honor, the day after our arrival in the Crescent City, of taking dinner together at the house of that high-bred and noble-hearted gentleman, whose hopes of diplomatic honor he had so cruelly nipped in the bud, and of enjoying at the same time his own most learned and instructive conversation whilst receiving the bland and courtly attentions of his most beauteous and accomplished lady.

Colonel White was a native of Orange county, Virginia, had represented Florida in the House of Representatives in the years 1826 and 1827, and perhaps for several sessions thereafter. He was a ripe scholar, a profound lawyer, and an accomplished man of the world. I first saw him and his famed helpmate at the Saratoga Springs in the summer of 1825. He was then buoyant and full of hope, and seemed to imagine that he had a long life of usefulness and felicity before him. I recollect that he was then just from Boston, where he had listened with rapture to Mr. Webster's first monument speech, and had attended the grand *fete* given the night after at the house of New England's sagest statesman to the Marquis de Lafayette, then on his travels in this country. White stated to me that he had seen James Barbour, of Virginia, at this same Websterian party, standing in a corner of the room, encircled by the Boston wits and *savants*, all listening with evident amusement and admiration to his rich and varied conversation, and to his choice and well-told anecdotes. I have seen James Barbour often; a nobler and more majestic looking person I never expect to behold. He was tall, straight, and of the most symmetrical proportions. He had a high and expanded forehead, large and lustrous eyes; his eyebrows, black and bushy, were most proudly and imperiously arched; his nose was aquiline, and as expressive as could have been that of Julius Cæsar himself. His erudition was limited, for his early opportunities had been slender. He always talked, though, with animation and earnestness; he ever looked the complete and polished gentleman; had a clear, resounding voice in debate, and was always listened to with respectful attention. He had less of party rancor about him than most public men of his time; never indulged in coarse and Billingsgate denunciation; and when he died I am sure he

had as few personal enemies as any man on the American continent. He commenced his political career as a zealous supporter of the Virginia resolutions of 1798–'99, afterward accepted Mr. Madison's gall-extracting solution of them, and ended his political life as a sturdy and immovable Whig of the Clay and Webster stamp.

REMINISCENCE No. VI.

MR. VAN BUREN—MR. TYLER—GEN. HARRISON—CÆSARISM.

The nomination of Martin Van Buren to the Presidency, in 1836, seemed to call for uncommon efforts to secure his election. The popularity of this gentleman outside the State of New York had not yet been subjected to any decisive test, and he had been so virulently and persistently assailed by some of the leading Whig statesmen, as well as by numerous editors of political newpapers of the Whig persuasion in different parts of the Union, that it was conjectured by some of his warmest friends and admirers that his elevation to the Presidency was an event by no means certain to occur. To be sure, he was openly and powerfully sustained by General Jackson, whose influence was now at its height, and who did not attempt to conceal the conviction which rested upon his mind that the great political reforms which he had been zealously conducting for the eight years of his memorable administration would depend for their consummation mainly upon the triumph of the Democratic party in the pending Presidential contest. It should be here mentioned that the opponents of Mr. Van Buren had unwittingly enhanced his popularity very much by an over-rancorous and unsparing assailment of him; a result which may be always confidently anticipated as the effect of such a course of proceeding so long as the popular masses of our country shall themselves remain pure and uncorrupted and capable of discriminating justly between the bold and needful arraignment of great public malefactors, and the attempts, so often witnessed in all

republics, to undermine and dishonor men of genuine merit and of eminent public services by mean and illiberal charges of delinquencies not capable of being satisfactorily established in proof. The fatuity manifested often by the shallow zealots of faction in their endeavors to crush men of known probity and ability by the preferring of accusations of a manifestly frivolous and unfounded character, alone with a view to the cherished purposes of faction, is to me one of the most wonderful moral phenomenons of the present age; and, inasmuch as such paltry and ill-judged attacks never fail to recoil sooner or later upon those who employ them, it may be regarded as a manifest proof both of intellectual weakness and a want of elevated self-respect to exhibit the least chagrin or irritation under such commendatory denunciation. Such, I am sure, were the views entertained by Van Buren touching this matter, as I know not only from his own repeated declarations, but from a very close observance of his demeanor and language in public life. His career as an active and leading politician had been already somewhat prolonged; he had been a conspicuous member of the Legislature of New York, Governor of the State, a United States Senator, Secretary of State under General Jackson, and a minister abroad, in all of which positions he had shown much ability; yet to very many of the people of the Southwestern States he was not very familiarly known, and among them he had been cruelly traduced by the celebrated George Poindexter and others of his class, who were accustomed to speak of him as "the Political Iago," "the Little Magician of Kinderhook," and in the use of like appellatives. It was judged in Mississippi to be expedient that some one should be deputed to Albany—where Mr. Van Buren was then temporarily sojourning—for the purpose of obtaining some

explanation from his own lips elucidatory of certain disputed points in his history. Being solicited to go upon this mission, I cheerfully undertook it, and proceeded to New York without any delay save that which was necessarily incident to my passing through Virginia on the way, where I wished to spend a day or two with several dear relatives and friends.

On reaching the city of Norfolk, I took passage on a comfortable steamer bound to Richmond. I found upon the boat a number of well-dressed gentlemen and ladies, all of whom were wholly unknown to me. In the course of an hour or two I chanced to get into a conversation with two gentlemen who reported themselves to be electors on the Harrison Presidential ticket, and what was at first a calm and courteous colloquy between us upon the politics of the time became very soon, as in such cases is usual, a boisterous and excited controversial dispute, not possible, indeed, to be in the least degree profitable to any human being. So soon as this scene had drawn to an end, I was again accosted by one of the gentlemen with whom I had been disputing, and asked by him whether I was acquainted with John Tyler. On my responding in the negative, he pointed out to me a gentleman, apparently a little past the meridian of life, very plainly dressed, who was at the time in an animated conversation with a fine looking and elegantly appareled lady. I surveyed this scene for a moment or two, when my civil *compagnon du voyage* inquired of me whether I had any objections to being introduced to John Tyler. "None in the world," I responded. "I have long admired his character very highly and shall feel it to be quite an honor to be presented to him." This accordingly took place at once, and I found myself in a minute or two more engaged in one of the most agreeable conversations I had ever enjoyed. Mr.

Tyler met me in an exceedingly bland and cordial manner, and at once opened himself to me in the frankest and most unreserved style upon many of the most attractive topics of the time, and very soon entered upon a calm and dignified discussion of several of the most contested points of political controversy then occupying the public mind; and, without demanding directly the expression of my own opinions thereupon, he gave me an opportunity of dissenting from him should I choose to do so. Being really very anxious to hear him talk, and being altogether unwilling to change the tone of our conversation by disputing the propositions so pleasantly enunciated by him, I cautiously avoided making any issue with him whatever; but, on the contrary, every now and then took occasion, as far as I could do so without seeming adulation, to refer, in a kind and complaisant manner, to certain of his own political acts which I had sincerely approved, and especially to his then recent manly resignation of the seat which he had held in the National Senate when he found himself unable to comply with the Legislative instructions which had been sent to him from Richmond, without a violation of his own sense of propriety. After this interchange of ideas had proceeded for nearly an hour, Mr. Tyler suddenly rose up and, assuming a most genial smile, invited the company to join him in a glass of wine. While we were in the act of enjoying the inspiring liquid supplied to us from the bar, Mr. Tyler waggishly turned to me and said: "I have a little joke which I must tell you upon these two electoral friends of ours. Just before you were introduced to me these two gentlemen came to me and said: 'Mr. Tyler, we have just encountered one of the fiercest Van Buren men we ever saw. He has said many things which were not a little annoying to us, and we have to ask of you to take him in hand and relieve

his mind from some of the strange delusions under which it is now laboring.' So, at their instance, I sought to draw you into discussion, and I feel gratified that in this way I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance." An hour or two after this, Mr. Tyler called me to him, on the right hand side of the boat, and said, pointing to a fine old building near the bank of the river: "There lived and died Benjamin Harrison, so much distinguished in the early history of the Ancient Dominion, who, you know, was probably a descendant of the Harrison, who was one of the associates of Cromwell. He was the largest man in the old Congress of the Confederation, and when John Hancock was elected President of that body he bore him to the chair in his arms. In that house, too, was born William Henry Harrison, one of the three candidates for the Presidency now in the field. I had the honor to be born in the same little county in which that venerable mansion is situated. Now, would it not be rather a curious coincidence were General Harrison to be elected President, as I really believe he will be, and I should be elected Vice President, upon the White ticket, an event which I hold not to be at all improbable, both of us being thus natives of this small county in Virginia?" Though the coincidence suggested did not arise in 1836, yet four years after, as all remember, General William Henry Harrison and John Tyler were chosen to the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the Republic upon the same ticket!

I must say of Mr. Tyler that both in our intercourse upon the steamer and in that which took place afterward between us on our arrival at Richmond, he evinced as much of good nature and of high-bred politeness as of intellectual resources. He was really one of the most genial and captivating men I ever encountered; there was not a

particle of hauteur or assumption in his aspect or demeanor; he seemed to be eminently frank and unconstrained in his conversation; had a clear and ringing voice, possessed a ready and insinuating smile, and, in fact, few could hold converse with him for ten or fifteen minutes even without feeling strongly impressed with his many high qualities, nor without feeling more or less inclined to sympathize with his fortunes. When we reached the hotel in Richmond Mr. Tyler proposed to me to go with him to call upon the venerable Thomas Ritchie, of the Richmond *Enquirer*, and John Hampden Pleasants, of the Richmond *Whig*. Finding neither of these gentlemen at home we proceeded to the Capitol of the State, and thence to the Governor's house. On reaching the latter he said: "Here is the house in which I undertook to play Governor in Virginia a few years ago. I was very reluctant to hold the office, but my political friends would compel me to do so, though I told them I was too poor to become Governor, my private fortune not being sufficient to defray the expenses incident to this high station, and the Governor's salary amounting to but an inconsiderable sum. On my inauguration as Governor I invited the members of the Legislature of both parties to partake of a banquet which I had caused to be prepared for them. They came and found a plentiful supply of Old Virginia ham upon the table, accompanied with a huge mass of well-baked corn-bread, together with a copious supply of Monongahela whisky; to all which I gave them a cordial welcome, hoping in this way to convey to them a significant hint that if they expected their Governor to live like a gentleman, and in a manner compatible with the dignity of our noble old State, they must provide for him liberally in the matter of *salary*."

When I reached Albany I found Mr. Van Buren in ex-

cellent health and spirits. He met me very cordially, took me to several interesting places in the city, and invited me to dine with him at 5 o'clock that day, having meanwhile conversed with me freely in regard to the objects of my trip. At dinner I met several gentlemen of eminence, all of whom are now numbered with the dead, including our delightful host himself; these were Governor Marcy, Senator Tallmadge, Chancellor Walworth, and John Van Buren. A more agreeable repast I have never enjoyed. Mr. Van Buren was, perhaps, as polished and captivating a person in the social circle as America has ever known, and on this occasion he was as agreeable as I ever knew him to be in after life, when I met him often and heard him converse without reserve upon all the questions which then occupied the public mind. I have long been of opinion that Mr. Van Buren possessed abilities far superior to the estimation formed of him by most of his cotemporaries. His mind was at once vigorous and comprehensive; his judgment upon the public questions with which he had to deal was singularly accurate and discriminating; his knowledge of men was most profound; he often evinced a most sagacious and penetrating foresight as to the future, and was a man of the most imperturbable spirit I have ever known. No one, I am certain, has ever exhibited greater refinement of manners, and his personal integrity was far beyond suspicion. When he was, at different times, a member of legislative bodies, he seldom spoke at great length, and never in a declamatory style. He expressed to me, when in Albany, in 1836, his decided aversion to this style of speaking in the National Senate, in which body he thought that the conversational tone and manner ought to prevail almost exclusively. It is wonderful to what a degree he had disciplined his own sensibilities, so as to make them almost

impervious to attacks made upon his feelings or character, even in his own presence. I recollect of once asking him if it could be indeed true that he had sat in the President's chair of the Senate perfectly unmoved, (as had been represented,) and with a serene smile upon his visage, when Mr. Clay was delivering one of the most powerful of his philippics, and in which he had been more than once himself referred to with the most terrible severity; when he answered: "Eloquent as certainly was that speech to which you refer, all-potential as were Mr. Clay's voice and manner, bitter as was his denunciation, and caustic as was his ridicule, I am not aware that the listening to his electrical utterances had any disturbing effect upon my feelings, and I suppose that my appearance at the time must have been in harmony with my emotions. While Mr. Clay was thundering forth that magnificent address—which certainly seemed to have much effect upon most of those in hearing of it—the idea was passing through my mind that this speech would be of much advantage to me; that it would tend greatly to strengthen the attachment of my political friends; would warm up their sympathies in my behalf, and concentrate their regard; while even the more generous of my opponents, including, perchance, Mr. Clay himself in a cooler and less excited moment, would feel that I had been greatly wronged by such wholesale and spiteful denunciation. I do not know whether or not I smiled on that occasion, as you have been told that I did, and as it would have been quite natural that I should have done with the particular view which I took of the matter; but it is certain that when I descended from the chair on the adjournment of the Senate, and met Mr. Clay, I spoke to him with my accustomed civility and kindnes, and without harboring a sentiment of hostility toward him."

After the decease of Mr. Van Buren a volume emanated from the press of New York which I read with great interest and instruction. This book contains the views which its distinguished author entertained upon government and the history of political parties in the United States from the earliest period of our annals as a nation. It is to be deeply regretted that Mr. Van Buren did not live to complete this remarkable work, as indeed that portion of it which seems to have received the finishing touches of his pen must inevitably claim for him hereafter a very high place among the public writers of our country. I was particularly struck with what he says so impressively in regard to the wholesome and conservative influence of the agricultural class of our population in the maintenance of republican institutions, and in keeping up among our people simplicity of manners and freedom from social contamination. I am persuaded that no one can read with due attention this noble contribution to our national literature without finding his love of a rational and orderly freedom renovated and strengthened, and his hopes of the perpetuity of our noble institutions vivified and confirmed. If those who distrusted Mr. Van Buren's motives while living, and charged him with the worst designs against our republican system of government, will do themselves the justice to examine this last solemn revelation of his thoughts and wishes, I am sure that they will feel bound to accord to him a very lofty position on the roll of American statesmen and patriots.

And yet a distinguished gentleman of the South, at one time much admired and loved by certain political extremists of that region, some twenty-five or thirty years ago, wrote a political novel, the significant title of which was, I believe, "The Partisan Leader," in which Mr. Van

Buren is delineated as a monster capable of planning the destruction of our valued republican institutions, and aspiring to establish on American soil a monarchical despotism.

I do not feel willing to close my notice of this wise and pure-minded man and his valuable posthumous volume without stating my full concurrence in the opinion expressed therein by him, that so long as we shall continue to hold within our frontiers a numerous, wide extended, and enlightened agricultural class, duly mindful of their rights, and ever prepared to maintain them, there can be no great danger that an imperial despotism will ever be seen to cast its dark shadow over this continent, or that any considerable number of our people will be anywhere found enunciating a desire for the overthrow of our republican fabric of government. I feel bound, after having gone thus far, to go yet further, and declare the conviction which I feel, after the fullest consideration of the subject and the most scrutinizing examination of all the signs of the times, that no man has yet been born on American soil so stupid and so unprincipled as to harbor the insane and monstrous idea that to him has been consigned by Destiny the task of building up an imperial dynasty, like that either of the first and second of the Cæsars of the olden time, or that of Napoleon the Great and Napoleon the Little of our own age. It is a gross insult to the American people to suppose them capable of submitting to such degradation as this; and it is still a grosser insult, if possible, to the principles of decency and justice to charge any living American patriot with such ineffable treachery and baseness.

REMINISCENCE No. VII.

GENERAL JACKSON—WILLIAM C. PRESTON—ROBERT J. WALKER—LOUIS LEVIN—COLONEL WHARTON—MARQUIS OF MOSCATI.

The last days of the Congress which closed its session on the 4th of March, 1837, were in part occupied with the discussion of the Texas question. President Jackson had, some months previous, sent to Texas a special governmental agent, to examine carefully into the condition of affairs in that region, with a view to enabling our own Government to decide in a safe and judicious manner the interesting question whether it would be proper to recognize the Texan Republic, which had then been recently established, as an independent power. The report of the agent deputed thither had been some days previous laid before Congress by the President, and many influential members, both of the Senate and the House of Representatives, had come to the conclusion that an act of formal recognition should at once take place, while others opposed this under the reasonable apprehension that such a course of proceeding might involve our country in a troublesome and unprofitable war with the Mexican Republic. I have seldom been more entertained than I was with the debates which took place in Congress during the latter part of the month of February and the beginning of the succeeding month upon this subject. In the Senate, William C. Preston, of South Carolina, and Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, were the most active and zealous advocates of recognition, but a number of other Senators took a very prominent part in support of this movement. Great excitement prevailed in regard to this matter, and it was

finally decided to be best to go no further in the affair for the present than to co-operate with the President in sending a *Chargé d'Affaires* to the capital of Texas; and, with a view to saving the incoming administration from what was deemed a delicate and grave responsibility, it was judged most prudent that General Jackson should himself make the nomination. He accordingly sent in the name of Mr. Labranche, of Louisiana, who, after a rather excited debate upon his merits and qualifications, was at last confirmed.

A day or two after this the two Texas plenipotentiaries then in Washington, whose official character had not been at all recognized by our Government, gave a grand dinner at their rooms, to which some forty or fifty of the leading friends of the cause which they represented were invited. I remember that there were present at this dinner John C. Calhoun, William C. Preston, Robert J. Walker, John J. Crittenden, John Bell, Waddy Thompson, General Edmond P. Gaines, and many others of great worth and respectability. There was a most delightful interchange of sentiment on the occasion, and several very brilliant oratorical effusions were elicited. A few days after I set out for my own distant home in the Southwest, in company with a number of gentlemen whose society along the journey helped much to beguile the difficulties and annoyances at that time necessarily consequent upon a trip which had to be performed in a great degree by stages, the Baltimore and Ohio railroad having then been completed only as far as Fredericktown, Maryland. Several of our company, including the two Texan Ministers, General Memucan Hunt and Colonel William H. Wharton, General Thomas J. Green, of Texas, Amos Kendall, then Postmaster General, and myself, had the pleasure of supping at the house of Colonel Skinner on the evening

of our arrival in Baltimore, and to talk over, in a manner to me alike interesting and instructive, the reigning topics of the period. I never saw Mr. Kendall in so gladsome and communicative a mood, and he from time to time discoursed upon the gravest and most important questions of State with a profundity and power which left a lasting impression on my mind.

We were detained in Baltimore until the evening succeeding our arrival in that city, awaiting the setting forth of the rail-car to Fredericktown, and during the intermediate time a scene occurred which I am inclined here to relate, at the hazard of being regarded by some as a little frivolous and fanciful. I was walking out in the morning about 10 o'clock, along one of the most frequented streets of the city, when I unexpectedly met a gentleman formerly well known in Mississippi, who told me that he was on his way to the hotel where I was staying for the purpose of inviting me and the friends who were traveling with me to dinner at his house that day. He told me that he would accept no refusal of the invitation tendered, and that the preparations for the banquet in prospect had been already made. Of course I accepted his hospitable offer, as did all the others invited. He requested me to come to his house an hour or two before the moment of dining would arrive, as he wished to introduce me to the lady whom he had recently married and with whom he knew I would be charmed.

Before I proceed further with my story let me give some account of the individual who was thus putting himself to so much trouble and expense for our entertainment.

Louis Levin was a South Carolinian by birth; by descent an Israelite. He was a man of exceedingly handsome person, at least in early life. His mind was full of activity and sprightliness. He possessed the most remarkable memory I have ever known. His organ of language

was so large that his bright eyes positively almost seemed when he chanced to be a little excited, to be ready to fall from their sockets. He had been well educated; had read much, and had forgotten nought that he had ever learned. He knew most of the best English poetry by heart, and sometimes, when called on to do so, made recitations far more impressive than any that I ever heard from Macready, Booth, or Forrest. His declamation of Collins' "Ode to the Passions" was so masterly as positively to electrify all who witnessed it. His conversational powers were very remarkable; though he seemed in general to talk far more from memory than as the result of present cogitation. He spoke in public with great fluency, but without much display of argumentative power. I am well satisfied that he was a person of most kind and genial disposition, and that if he had possessed the treasures of the world he would have lavished them all upon friends that he loved, or have expended them in the accomplishment of objects which chanced to be especially desirable to him. He was brave almost to a fault, and was imbued with all the most extreme notions of Southern chivalry.

I saw this very remarkable person first in the city of Vicksburg, about the year 1832, at which place he had but recently arrived, bearing with him letters of introduction to myself and others from gentlemen of standing then resident in the county of Wilkinson, in the same State. He had just emerged from a duel, fought with a young man about his own age, who, after Levin had delivered a brilliant 4th of July oration, and was receiving on all sides the commendations of those who had heard it, had laid claim to its authorship. Levin lingered about Vicksburg for some time, and there his very impulsive nature got him into several serious personal quarrels, from which I had much trouble in rescuing him. At length he disappeared from Vicksburg, and in a few weeks I heard

of his having made his *entree* into the city of Nashville, where, hearing his native State, South Carolina, then involved in the convulsive throes of Nullification, fiercely denounced, as well as several of her leading statesmen of that period, by one or two public speakers of eminence, he boldly mounted the stand and poured forth such a tirade of vindicatory declamation as astounded all who listened to it. Remaining then for several weeks in Nashville, he became decidedly a social lion, and succeeded in captivating the heart of a young lady of that vicinage whose rare beauty and accomplishments are yet spoken of in Middle Tennessee in language of unqualified commendation, and the virtues of whose heart are, if possible, still more esteemed and praised. To this lady he was in a short time married. But alas! she did not long survive. On her decease Levin journeyed to Baltimore, in order to procure a suitable monument for the helpmate he had so unfortunately lost. On going one morning into the workshop of a worthy lapidary of that city for the purpose of leaving directions with him for the preparation of a suitable tombstone for his departed wife, he saw a beautiful young widow who had come thither also with a view to performing the same pious honors to the memory of a husband who had been recently taken from her. The coincidence of their coming together on that spot so unexpectedly when having precisely similar missions to execute struck them both most forcibly. In short, they fell in love at once, and in a week or two it was generally known in Baltimore and the surrounding country that a marriage between these two romantic young people would soon occur. It chanced that at this time a gentleman was spending a few days in Baltimore who was of some prominence in the city of Nashville, who, hearing of the match which was in contemplation, and not being at all prepossessed in favor of Levin, deemed it his duty

to interpose for the purpose of disappointing his connubial anticipations. What this gentleman did or said on the occasion I have never exactly known. It is certain, though, that this unlooked for interference roused the ire of my inflammable friend Levin very greatly, and that he sought out this personage without delay on the street-side, and made upon him a fierce attack, which very demonstrably indicated the deep sense of injury with which his own bosom was lacerated. This transaction found its way very promptly into a court of criminal cognizance where Levin, following up the example of Cæsar, of whom Quintillian says: "He spoke with the energy with which he fought," he undertook his own defense, and so acquitted himself of this duty as to awaken much admiration and sympathy among those who listened to his indignant philippic. All impediments to his marriage being thus removed, he soon found himself the possessor of a lady whose personal charms were greatly set off and heightened by the large estate which she held in ownership. In a month or two more Levin became very favorably known as a defender of criminals in the courts of Baltimore, and I recollect that on the very morning that I had met him on the street-side, in the manner already described, while he and I were holding brief converse, a gentleman of very good exterior approached us, and was introduced to me as the son of the renowned William Pinckney, who commended Levin in the most emphatic manner on account of a very felicitous speech which he said that he had heard from his lips in the Criminal Court the day before.

I proceeded to the house of Mr. Levin so soon as I could make my toilet, and was there presented to his very handsome and captivating lady, the charms of whose conversation exceeded even the beauty of her person. She was rather low of stature, but elegantly proportioned; her face

was delicate and well formed; her expression was perfectly angelic, and her voice was as sweet and inspiring as that of the nightingale itself. The company soon arrived, and the few hours which now flew rapidly away were marked with a joyousness of spirit which I am sure has never been surpassed.

The indomitable Levin attended our party to Fredericktown that evening, and, soon after reaching the hotel where we were to spend the night, he made known to us his wish that we should attend at his room, at the hour of 9 o'clock, to participate in a farewell scene of good humor and jollity, which he thought would a little soften the pain of our expected separation. We attended accordingly, and found wine and hot whisky-punch flowing there in abundance. Just before this goodly company dispersed to their places of rest an incident occurred which impressed me very forcibly indeed, and upon which I have often pleasantly ruminated since. A young lawyer of promise belonging to the Maryland bar, whose name I do not choose to mention here, came up to be presented to Mr. Levin. He was a very fine-looking person, and possessed a countenance expressive both of good nature and intellect. I observed that during the scene of introduction he evinced a blushing embarrassment not at all usual in such cases. Presently, in the tenderest accents of interrogation, he inquired after the health of Mrs. Levin, whom he said he had known previous to her marriage. There was something in the aspect and manner of the young gentleman, as well as in the tones of his voice, which irresistibly conveyed to my mind at the moment images which prompted me to propound to him at once, in as kind and delicate a manner as I could, several questions, which, with the tremulous responses made to them, I will here recite: "Tell me, my dear sir, did not you know Mrs. Levin before marriage?" "I did," he

answered, with much embarrassment. "Did you not *love* her?" I then asked. "I did," he responded, with increasing confusion. "Did you not at one time expect confidently to marry her?" I asked. He replied in the affirmative, and burst into tears.

This *denouement* was exceedingly surprising to Levin himself, as well as to all others present, for he assured me that he had never heard before that his wife had such an acquaintance in the world.

A year or two elapsed, and I heard of Levin in Philadelphia, where he was reported to have taken an active part in those memorable riotous proceedings which eventuated in the burning of a Catholic church there. In process of time he was taken up as an anti-Catholic and a Know-Nothing, and sent to Congress, where I found him when I took my seat in the Senate in December, 1847. I frequently visited him and his amiable wife during my stay in Washington. I resigned my place in the Senate, and after passing through many intermediate scenes of turmoil and strife, both in Mississippi and in California, visited Washington again in 1858. It was soon made known to me that my friends of former days were in the city, and were boarding at one of the hotels. Here I visited Mr. Levin and his wife; but, alas! what changes had occurred in both of them! Levin, from long-continued genial excesses and other causes, had become insane, and had, as I was told, been the occupant of a cell in the Lunatic Asylum, from which he had but recently emerged. His wife was a victim of chronic rheumatism, and had grown old before her time. She was still cheerful in converse, and seemed not to have altogether lost her early vivacity. She alluded to the scenes of the past in a kind and graceful manner, complained not of the calamities which had fallen upon her, and seemed to have most happily concentrated all the solicitude of her nature

upon a darling and accomplished daughter in whose person and intellect she might well recognize her own early graces to have been reproduced. I was asked by these doting parents to take charge of this young lady that very evening and see her safely to the great party which Mr. Douglas was then giving to Mr. Bancroft. So, indeed, I did, and soon after took my leave of this interesting family, expecting never to behold two of them again on this side the tomb. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

After the usual discomforts of traveling by stage, our party arrived at Louisville without anything having occurred to us worth relating. When about to commence our journey down the Ohio river on board the fine steamer Sultana, Colonel Wharton came to me with a newspaper in his hand, which he asked me to read. It was a number of the *National Gazette*, of Philadelphia, and gave an account of a very remarkable man who had just left London in disgust, and was then, as was reported, somewhere in the United States. This person had made his appearance in the British metropolis a few years before as the Marquis of Moscati. He had been greatly ridiculed in one of the London newspapers, and been denounced as an arrant *humbug*, and various reasons were given for thus assailing him. He had instituted a suit for libel, and the case had just been tried and determined in the Court of King's Bench. On the trial much evidence *pro* and *con* had been adduced, of which only a small portion can be here mentioned. All the testimony of the defense had been introduced in support of the plea of *justification* which had been put in. The plaintiff was proved at different times to have claimed the authorship of the Pelham novels, and yet Lord Lytton, on being brought forward to testify, bore evidence that he was himself the sole author of the books in question; but he added that he knew the Marquis well; that he was, as he thought, a very amiable

and accomplished man, and that he had repeatedly employed him to write articles for his literary magazine; that, though a foreigner by birth, he was an admirable English scholar, and was a man of very large attainments in general science. It was further proved that the plaintiff claimed to be the Marquis of Moscati, of Italy; and yet, was it attested, in a very clear and satisfactory manner, that there was no such Marquisate in Italy now, and that there never had been. It was alleged that the plaintiff had frequently boasted that he had fought ninety-odd duels and had shot every one of his antagonists in the left eye. It was further deposed that he had asserted himself to have a genuine Toledo blade, which he usually wore wrapped around his person, but which he could in an instant disengage whenever he chose to do so, and apply it to all the purposes for which a sword is capable of being used. It was proved, in addition, that he had claimed to have occupied a prominent position in all the great battles fought by Napoleon, and that he had been asked by the usurper, Don Miguel, to come to Portugal and take command of all his forces, which he had emphatically refused to do upon the ground of his being a republican in principle. Of course the suit for libel failed, upon which the plaintiff was described to have left England in great indignation for the United States, alleging that the jury had found a false verdict, and that he had been cruelly persecuted in England on account of his political opinions.

When I had read through the article, "Now," says Colonel Wharton, "this man is actually on board our boat. He has been pointed out to me in the city, and I have followed him down to this spot." After saying this he asked me to endeavor to form an acquaintance with him, and see what sort of person he was. And so I did; and approaching the well-dressed, keen-looking, and rather handsome little man, who was avouched by Colonel Whar-

ton to be the person whose movements he had been watching so closely, I accosted him very civilly, told him in a kind way that I knew very well who he was, and, encouraging him to confess his actual identity, by assuring him that his republican principles, so far from raising up enemies to him in this favored country would only surround him with friends who would "stick closer to him than a brother," he finally donned the Marquisate title once more, though he had written his name in the book containing the list of steamboat passengers in such a way that all the letters which he had inscribed there, if pronounced together, could not be made to produce a single articulate sound. I soon after introduced him to all my friends on board as the veritable Marquis of Moscati, of Italy; and all the way from Louisville to Vicksburg (at which latter place I left the boat and took final leave of the Marquis, who was bound for New Orleans) he talked almost incessantly, told a thousand of the most marvelous stories of himself and his travels of which it is possible to conceive, all the while giving abundant evidence of his learning, his good breeding, and his kind and accommodating temper. I recollect that one of the gentlemen to whom I had introduced him, Colonel John H. Claiborne, (then a Representative in Congress from the State of Mississippi,) having informed the Marquis that he was about to set out on a journey to Europe, that he expected to visit Rome in a month or two, and that, as he (the Marquis) had professed to be personally acquainted with that illustrious personage, he would be glad to get a letter of introduction to his Papal Majesty; he at once complied, and wrote in his behalf one of the most polished and elegant Latin epistles I ever saw, which same epistle I do not at all doubt my distinguished Mississippi friend yet has.

REMINISCENCE No. VIII.

JOHN C. CALHOUN—JOHN P. HALE—ROBERT J. WALKER—HANGMAN FOOTE.

It was early in the summer of 1848 that an occurrence took place in Washington city which was productive of great excitement at the time, and which called forth, also, much of that sort of crimination and recrimination which never fails to leave behind it feelings of permanent alienation and rancor, except, perchance, in a few bosoms of a more generous mold than ordinary mortals can be expected to possess. Several of the unfortunate sons and daughters of a race, whom a selfish and semi-barbarous policy, originating in the Old World, and darkening with its gloomy shadow the beautiful hills and valleys of our own natal land for more than two sad centuries of shame and sorrow, were prompted by that love of freedom, which is everywhere inherent in the human bosom, to project a scheme for their own enfranchisement, and it was understood that some of them had sought concealment and refuge in the free States of the North, whither they had been counseled to go by several members of Congress of much and deserved prominence at the time. One or two of these refugees were reported to have been in the ownership of certain Southern members of Congress, who had brought them to Washington, not for sale—which would have been a palpable violation of the then existing laws of the District of Columbia—but as domestic servants, and deemed by them, at least, altogether essential to the convenience and comfort of themselves and of their families. A movement so unusual and seeming to bode such extensive mischief in the future may be easily imagined

to have had a very startling influence in certain quarters, and much aggravation was supposed to have been lent to this affair by the circumstance that the members of Congress from the free States who were charged to have given their countenance to this project of elopement boldly confessed their own complicity therein, both in the newspapers and in the two houses of the National Legislature. When I reached my seat in the Senate on the morning after the flight of these poor children of bondage had occurred, I found Mr. Calhoun on his feet, and denouncing, with a fervid vehemence of tone and manner, very unusual with this grave and solemn Senator, what he depictured as a fearful outrage upon the whole body of Southern slave-holders—an outrage, he said, which, if tamely submitted to, would in a short time bring about the entire overthrow of a system of labor alike indispensable to the enjoyment and prosperity of the cotton and tobacco growing region as to the wealth and greatness of other portions of the Republic. When he closed his remarks, not without striking indications of exhaustion —he came to my seat and said: "I now leave this matter in the hands of my younger friends from the South. I have stood here long in the front of battle, almost single-handed and alone, defending the rights of our slave-holding constituents, and I begin to feel it to be high time that such men as your colleague, Mr. Davis, and yourself, should come forward to my relief." This was an appeal which I found it almost impossible to resist, though really I had never seen the time when I would have either gone or sent an agent in quest of a runaway slave, and had always been disposed to recognize the fact that one whose acuteness and intelligence were such as to enable him to achieve his own deliverance from thraldom might be well presumed to be altogether capable of enjoying a state of freedom and of creditably maintaining his new-found

rights. Waiting a few minutes for that Boanerges of debate, John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, to close a most stormy and indignant harangue, in which his facility in the application of potential and striking epithets had been fully displayed, I leaped to my feet and made, as I must frankly confess, under the overwhelming excitement of the moment, one of the most fumy, rabid, and insulting speeches that has ever dishonored a grave and dignified parliamentary body; in which I told Mr. Hale, in plain terms, that were he to visit any thickly-settled vicinage in Mississippi, and there use such language as that which he had just uttered, I did not at all doubt that he would incur the hazard of being strung up on one of the loftiest trees of the forest; and that in such case, should there be any want of a willing executioner, I would myself turn hangman for his benefit. These frantic and indecent words had scarcely been enunciated ere I became painfully sensible of the stupid and unbecoming nature of my conduct, and I would have really given worlds to recall all the nonsense I had uttered.

In less than forty-eight hours I received hundreds of anonymous letters, filled with the most caustic revilement, and others inclosing the most hideous caricatures of a person whom these same caricatures denominated "Hangman Foote." I positively writhed in agony. Never had my self-respect suffered such severe humiliation. I felt that the fabled shirt of Nessus was actually enveloping my limbs. Meanwhile, the jolly and kind-hearted Senator from New Hampshire and myself had long since gotten on good terms, and I had even taken up a decided liking for him on account of his genial disposition, his natural amiableness of temper, and his sparkling vivacity, either in debate or in conversation. One morning, a month or two after the scene which has been just narrated, Mr. Hale came to my seat and told me he had a favor to

ask of me, which he could not doubt that I would grant; that there was a young man of his acquaintance, a native of New Hampshire, who had been prosecuted for forgery, or some kindred offense, who, having been convicted, was then in jail. He said that the prosecution had taken place under Federal jurisdiction, and that the culprit would have to depend upon the clemency of the President of the United States for pardon. "Now," said he, "you are, I know, on most intimate terms with the Secretary of the Treasury, Robert J. Walker, who will, I am sure, recommend this young man for pardon on your request." He added, that though he could not doubt that the young man referred to was guilty as charged, yet he was satisfied that there were extenuating circumstances in the case; that the offender was of very tender years and of a highly-respectable connection; and he then closed by informing me that his sister, a young pure-minded, and affectionate girl, had come on all the way from New England, hoping to carry back with her to the bosom of his family her erring but much-loved brother. Mr. Hale really made this out to be almost a second Jenny Deans affair, and though, perchance, I did not actually shed many tears over his tender recital, it is certain that I promptly undertook the mission suggested. Proceeding at once to Mr. Walker and the President, I found no difficulty in obtaining the pardon asked for, and returned to the Capitol in less than two hours from the time I had set out on this errand of mercy. On placing the pardon in the hands of Mr. Hale, he introduced me to the young lady, who was indeed overpowered with the good tidings which I had brought. He then turned to her and said, in his own characteristic way: "Young lady, this is a gentleman of whom you have often heard in New England. He is one of the Senators from Mississippi. To him alone are you indebted for the liberation of your brother. When you

get home again be sure to tell your friends and neighbors there never again to call him 'Hangman Foote.'" However generous may have been Mr. Hale's intentions in this regard, I am constrained to acknowledge that I have often since had proof that this euphonious and impressive *soubriquet* has not yet ceased to vibrate upon the lips of many among the excellent descendants of the time-honored pilgrims.

Mr. Calhoun is entitled to more than the casual mention which has been here made of him. He was unquestionably a very extraordinary man. Few more logical and vigorous reasoners have ever made their appearance in the world. He was as pure-minded and incorruptible a statesman as our country has ever produced. His morals were such as philosophers might emulate and saints approve. He was intensely ambitious of public honors, but he would have scorned to accept the most exalted elevation which had to be reached by trickish subtlety, by hypocritical double-dealing, or by fraud. His knowledge of public affairs was profound, but was chiefly confined to the concerns of his own country. His general literary attainments bore no proportion to his knowledge of the principles upon which our Government was originally founded, and the histories of party struggles on American soil. He sought not at any time to obtain recognition as a scholar, nor do I think that he had ever read with attention a Greek or Latin book since he left college. I once found him in his room glancing over the pages of some novel which had just emanated from the press; he told me that it was the first book of the sort he had ever read, and that he was perusing this one only at the request of some female friend who had sent it to him from Charleston a few days before for his examination. In the early part of his public career he had entertained political opinions very different from those he had adopted

in subsequent life and after his quarrel with General Jackson. He had been, when Secretary of War under Mr. Monroe, a zealous advocate of an extended "system" of internal improvements by the General Government; he had voted in Congress some years before this for a national bank, and had given his deliberate sanction to the principle of protection. In 1833 he had become an out-and-out nullifier, and had issued two elaborate *exposés* in support of the doctrine which he had then embraced. His views assumed a strictly sectional character during the last twenty years of his life, and I am persuaded that no reward could have tempted him to tread upon *terra firma* anywhere north of Mason and Dixon's line. He had long since ceased to feel the least confidence in the permanency of our Federal Union, and he often openly avowed the opinion that republican institutions, in their purest and most useful form, could only be upheld in this hemisphere on the basis of African slavery. He was, for several years previous to his decease, struggling to call into existence a Southern convention, through the instrumentality of which he hoped to bring about a peaceful separation of the States. His celebrated "Address to the People of the South," issued about two years before his death, and subscribed by many who did not fully comprehend its true import and purpose, was doubtless, as subsequent events most clearly proved, designed by him to pave the way to the accomplishment of the end which he had so much at heart. The second grand expedient upon which he relied for the termination of a political union which had positively become hateful to him was the assemblage of a convention at Nashville in 1850. He hoped that the proceedings of this body would be such as effectually to defeat the efforts then making in Congress to settle all the difficulties existing in connection with slavery, and enable the South to set up a new govern-

ment, under a constitution which he repeatedly avowed he had prepared for her, and in which the perpetuation of African slavery would be a leading and fundamental feature. The fatal tendency of the Nashville convention movement was happily counteracted by the wise and manly conduct of its President, Judge William L. Sharkey; else there is no conjecturing what ruinous effects might have resulted from the action of this body. Some time before the last Congress which Mr. Calhoun attended met—in the month of October, 1849—I had written a letter urging him warmly to take the lead, upon the opening of Congress, in moving the admission of California. He had written a letter in reply stating his firm determination to keep California out of the Union as long as he could, but avowing at the same time his entire willingness to vote for the admission of Utah. In the latter Territory, he said, the convention which had assembled there had provided for the introduction of slavery; whereas California, as he had learned, was overspread with abolitionists, to whom, he stated, the New York regiment sent there by Mr. Polk had served as a nucleus. I wrote to him repeatedly before he reached Washington city, urging him, upon various grounds, to modify his views touching this matter, but to no purpose. When he got to Washington he very soon became greatly excited, and declared to myself and to others that he thought the time for compromise had gone by, and that he should hold any Southern man dishonored who would, in the condition of things then existing, *initiate* a proposition of that kind. At length the last scene of this extraordinary man's public career had its progress. He had caused the most elaborate speech of his life to be prepared and to be put in print. He was unable to deliver it, and he, therefore, got Mr. Mason, one of the Senators from Virginia, to read it in the hearing of the Senate. Never shall I forget the im-

port of that most alarming speech or Mr. Calhoun's excited aspect while it was being read. To all the most menacing positions embodied therein he bowed his head assentingly, and looked round the Senate-room with an expression of fierce determination, which I had never seen him exhibit on any other occasion.

I greatly apprehended the effect of that speech upon the deliberations of the Nashville convention, which body was then in session. When I read it in the newspapers next morning I found that in the name of the South he had demanded a constitutional amendment, which he said was indispensable to the settlement of the questions in agitation. So, early that day, I brought the subject to the notice of the Senate and the country, and declared emphatically that I did not concur with Mr. Calhoun in his demand for a constitutional amendment. This gentleman coming in while I was yet speaking, interrupted me for a moment, and, after interrogating me in regard to the allusions I had been making to himself, and after having heard my response thereto, he said, as reported in the *Congressional Globe:*

"But I will say, and I say it boldly, for I am not afraid to say the truth on any question, that, as things now stand, the Southern States can not with safety remain in the Union. When this question may be settled, when we shall come to a constitutional understanding, is a question of time; but, as things now stand, I appeal to the Senator from Mississippi if he thinks that the South can remain in the Union upon terms of equality."

To which I am reported as having replied:

"We can not, unless the pending questions are settled; but, in my opinion, these questions may be settled, and *honorably settled*, within ten days' time."

Then rejoined Mr. Calhoun:

"Does the Senator think that the South can remain in the Union upon terms of equality without a specific guarantee that she shall enjoy her rights unmolested?"

To which the answer, as reported, was:

"I think she may, *without any previous amendment of the Constitution.* There we disagree."

Mr. Calhoun then frankly responded:

"Yes, there we disagree entirely; and there, I think, he disagrees with our ancestors. I agree with them."

It is evident to all minds now that had this demand of a new guarantee for slavery been concurred in by the whole South in 1850 civil war would have been inevitably brought upon the land. It was the injudicious getting up of a similar demand afterward, in 1861, and the refusal to accede to it, which caused the war of four years through which the country has since passed. Whether if Mr. Calhoun had lived he would have persevered in this requisition to the extreme apparently indicated may be perhaps a little questionable. He greatly preferred discussion to the shedding of blood, and would possibly have been found willing to retrace his steps had he seen murder and carnage before him.

REMINISCENCE No. IX.

SAFETY COMMITTEE OF NEW YORK—MR. CLAY AND GENERAL CASS—GENERAL PIERCE—MR. BUCHANAN—MR. DOUGLAS—MR. DICKINSON—JEFF DAVIS.

I have not heretofore noticed a very important movement which originated in the city of New York, (a place ever remarkable for its steady conservatism in national politics,) which, had it been allowed to progress to its natural and hoped-for termination, would have tended greatly to harmonize all the conflicting elements then astir in the land, and would in all probability have ushered in a new "era of good feeling." Tarrying for a day or two on certain friends in this great commercial emporium, when on my way to Washington, in the month of November, 1851, I was visited by a number of gentlemen belonging to what was then known as the Safety Committee of the city of New York, composed of a hundred individuals of great respectability and wealth, which committee had rendered great service to the Union cause during the trying period of 1850. By these persons I was consulted seriously touching the expediency of getting up, if such a thing should be found practicable, a mixed Presidential ticket for the canvass of 1852, upon which should be inscribed the name of one Democrat and one Whig, both of whom should be known to be men of weight and experience, and true to the cause of the Union. The names of Mr. Clay and General Cass were the two most favored at that time in New York, and perhaps in every State of the North, the South, the East, and the West. I was greatly pleased with the scheme proposed, and at once agreed to co-operate therein most

zealously. The disjointed and demoralized condition of both the old party organizations at that time, each of which was known within its bosom to contain elements of extremism constantly threatening combustion and anarchy, seemed to demand very imperiously that these organizations should be recognized as now in a defunct state, and that a new political party should be called into existence, strictly national in its character, and which would be strong enough to suppress faction everywhere and consolidate the Government upon a platform recognizing the compromise measures of 1850 as a complete and final settlement, in principle and in substance, of the distracting questions growing out of African slavery.

Such a ticket as that suggested, it was believed, would sweep the Union from Maine to California, and defeat the hopes of those everywhere who preferred sectionalism to nationality. The committee promised to have suitable resolutions prepared for adoption at a large popular assemblage soon to be held in the city of New York; and they engaged also to address at the proper time a letter to Mr. Clay, and another to General Cass, asking of them the privilege of using their names in the manner suggested. These letters were to be inclosed to me, on condition that I would at once hand them to the parties to whom they were to be directed, and would ask of them respectfully and earnestly a prompt response to the same. I had the honor to be requested also to express to the committee my own opinion of the project, provided that on reaching Washington the views then entertained by me should undergo no change. In a few days the letters from the committee reached my hands, and I lost no time in delivering to Messrs. Clay and Cass the communications addressed to them, accompanying this act with a very warm solicitation on my part that they would comply with the patriotic demand with which they had been

honored. Mr. Clay was then in a very feeble state of health, and was not expecting even to live more than a year or two longer at most. He had long since ceased to cherish Presidential aspirations; but his great soul was yet beating healthfully and fervently for his country's repose and happiness. He at once consented to pursue the course suggested by the committee, provided General Cass should agree to co-operate in the movement. Mr. Clay, it will be recollected, had some time before announced his opinion that the time had arrived for the Whig party to retire from the arena, and I know that he entertained precisely the same view in regard to the duty of those who constituted what was called the Democratic party.

For a day or two after the delivery of these important letters I really thought most confidently that the movement must inevitably prove a great success. But the event showed that I greatly underrated the power of party bigotry, and the inclination almost unavoidable among the accustomed leaders of great political movements to rely for the attainment of desired public ends exclusively and implicitly upon the well-organized party machinery which they hold at the time under their control, and with all the mysterious operations of which long use has rendered them thoroughly familiar. It is, perhaps, but natural for such persons to suppose that to rescue a country from danger by instrumentalities different from those they have been in the habit of employing would be almost equivalent to taking poison—certain to slay, in order to get rid of some troublesome malady, conjectured to be otherwise incurable. To go outside the Democratic party with a hope of thus finding relief for evils preying upon the vitals of the body politic would seem even now to some veteran party managers whom I know to be far worse than formally giving their consent to the immediate death of the Republic itself. Instead of making

party merely a convenient, as it often is, a valuable subsidiary also to *patriotism*, they willingly sacrifice all patriotic purposes to the glory of the Democratic *name* and *discipline*. To reason with such persons is simply to waste your time, especially if they be such as have long-cherished desires of personal advancement by means of strict party support. So it was in this very instance. General Cass, whose aspirations to the Presidency had not yet left the pure and lofty bosom which they had so long animated, and who was now hopefully looking forward to a second nomination for the Presidency at the hands of the party which he had been very assiduously serving for a toilsome and troublous lifetime, read the letter sent him by the New York committee with equal surprise and mortification, and told me, with little appearance of gratitude for my officiousness in his behalf, that he would consult Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Douglas, and some others that he named from among his known political devotees, and that should they consent to his taking such a step as that now admonished, he would make known the fact as soon as he could after having been by them counseled to do so. In about two days he brought to me his letter of declension to the New York committee, and thus lost the best opportunity for the acquisition of true glory which had ever opened upon his view. Mr. Clay could of course only now imitate his example, and with a sore and aggrieved bosom I transmitted these responses to the appropriate destination, though not without protesting, as I have been so often constrained to do, over the madness as well as the dishonoring effects of a cold-blooded and soul-withering party-policy. I shall be excused for here adding that I was then quite as well satisfied as ever I have subsequently become that what was called the Democratic party had even then degenerated into a selfish and spoils-adoring faction; that as a politi-

cal organization it had lost all its lofty and disinterested aspirations; that it was destined only to be kept in existence for the benefit of such party managers as might feel that they had no right to hope for advancement upon the basis of merit and qualification, and must therefore rely alone upon a cunning trickery, and a super-subtile dexterity; and I am confident that I now see depicted upon the sky of a not distant future the deep disgrace and ruinous discomfiture which are to be hereafter the reward of those who, having no longer any great and patriotic ends to accomplish, and no distinctive principles to maintain, foolishly attempt to keep in existence names and symbols once of surpassing dignity, but which only now serve to cover the purposes of a low-minded ambition, and aid, perchance, in elevating to places of important public trust men whose sole usefulness really consists in the capability which they are seen sometimes to manifest of putting in use a sort of silent, whispering eloquence, a stupid, unharmfulness—the meet companion of this sort of impotency. In the forlorn condition of things which I then saw to exist I did not altogether despair, and I sought to anticipate the action of convention-party machinery by getting the two houses of Congress to adopt at once a resolution declaring the Compromise enactments of 1850 to be "a final settlement, in principle and substance, of all the distracting questions growing out of African slavery." This resolution I left in the Senate when I resigned my seat in that body in order to return to Mississippi, where I had just been elected Governor. Though it did not afterward pass the Senate, in a month or two the same resolution found its way, almost in *totidem verbis*, into the political platforms adopted by the Democratic and Whig national conventions respectively; the important words embraced in which, it was hoped by some, might be respected in office by him who should be chosen Presi-

dent in that contest, which soon after, to the surprise of all who could not comprehend the full force of party machinery and unscrupulous chicane, resulted in raising to the office once held by a Washington and a Jackson, Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire.

All acquainted with the history of that time need not now to be told that the main question existing in the popular mind in the Presidential canvass of 1852 was as to whether General Scott or General Pierce was the better *finality* man. That is to say, whether the country would be, in all probability, the more effectually tranquilized under the administration of the one or under that of the other? Mr. Pierce undoubtedly owed his nomination for the Presidency in 1852 mainly to the fact, very dexterously paraded at the time before the convention of the Democratic party in Baltimore, that he had a few weeks before written and published a strong *finality* letter; but for which circumstance he would certainly never have had an opportunity presented to him of cruelly disappointing the hopes of a generous and confiding people, and of rekindling as far as it lay in his power the smouldering fires of sectional strife into a perilous and all-destroying conflagration. Surely there was nothing in Mr. Pierce's abilities or habits of life to cause the public attention to be fixed upon him as a suitable person to mount the car of state at a moment so critical; and the furious and dashing vehemence with which he was soon seen to move along the political firmament might well have suggested to the classic mind the enterprising career of that fabled son of Phœbus, Phaeton by name, who is described as having on a certain occasion, in a moment of celestial frolicksomeness, set all the heavens in a blaze.

So emphatically had Mr. Pierce been recognized everywhere as irrevocably pledged to the compromise measures of 1850, and to the finality policy now annexed thereto,

that he notoriously lost many thousand votes in the South among men of secession proclivities on this account, and in Mississippi alone, it is within my own personal knowledge, that at least five thousand voters of this description refused him their support, while all who had voted for me in my contest with Jefferson Davis in the preceding gubernatorial canvass came forward cheerfully and yielded their full support to the opponent of that gallant, upright, and thrice glorious military commander, whom the Whigs had selected as their standard-bearer in that fierce conflict.

In reference to the matter at present under consideration, I find it stated in a work whose correctness it would become me least of all men living to call in question, that Mr. Pierce "had scarcely been elected to the Presidency when he called into special conference Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, one of the most extreme men in his opinions that, outside of South Carolina, the whole South contained, and the noted Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, who had signalized himself very specially, many years before, by delivering the most furious and uncompromising speech ever heard in Congress upon the occasion of Arkansas, asking admission into the Union; who, although he had afterward yielded support to the administration of Mr. Tyler for a short period, (for which his services had been rewarded with an Oriental commissionership, in which he is reported to have become quite a connoisseur in distinguishing between the savory flesh of *ducks* and that of the young *proles* of the canine species,) and though he had subsequently given his support to the Mexican war, and gone through certain romantic adventures beyond the Rio Grande without having a chance of staining his virgin sword with the hated blood of the foe, had really not a particle of claim to control the action of a Democratic administration entering upon its

official career under such circumstances as those which now surrounded Mr. Pierce. These two sage advisers are understood to have counseled Mr. Pierce to call to his Cabinet Mr. Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, who was then in profound retirement after his unsuccessful experiment of secession in 1851, in which retirement it is quite certain he would have permanently remained but for Mr. Pierce's being weak enough to act upon this advice. It is understood that this appointment was made with a view to conciliating the secessionists of the South, who had, as already observed, yielded to Mr. Pierce but a cold and reluctant support, many of them, indeed, and especially in Mr. Davis' own State, having altogether declined voting in the Presidential election. Mr. Cushing, who was to be Attorney General under the new *régime*, had reason to believe that by force of his early political affiliations and by the skillful distribution of the spoils of office he would bring into the fold all the aspirants to public station who then belonged to the abolition faction of the North, while Mr. Davis, by discriminating in appointing to office in favor of known disunionists and against those who had battled so faithfully for the Compromise measures, throughout the South, it was confidently expected would work wonders in attracting to the support of his over-confiding chief the sectional factionists of that region. It was fancifully enough supposed that the friends of the Union everywhere would infallibly remain firm in their support of Mr. Pierce on the ground of his former professions, so that there was, upon the whole, as they opined, a capital prospect of opening upon the country an administration of four years which would be fortunate enough to awaken no enmities, and an equally flattering prospect that Mr. Pierce would himself be re-elected in 1856, or that at least the privilege would be accorded to him of nominating his own successor; which successor would undoubtedly

have been the immortal Jeff. Davis himself how signally and cruelly all these fine-spun calculations were disappointed in the sequel, and how soon all these vapid and airy speculations passed away into the somber region of *nothingness*, the world now knows. Mr. Pierce, who imagined himself to possess, and who was supposed by some of his own partial friends also to possess quite a pretty talent for phosphorescent declamatory rhetoric, commenced so soon as he had a chance to do so, in his official messages and otherwise, discoursing vehemently upon the untold blessings of slavery. He extolled the Sunny South and all her peculiar modes of thought and sentiment in language of most glowing exuberance; proclaimed himself to all the world as a sort of heaven-descended champion of her slave-holding rights and interests; and very soon managed to disgust every truly national man in the country; giving renewed organization and overwhelming strength to the anti-slavery associations of the North; while the lavish outpouring of official patronage upon known Free-Soil Democrats of that section imparted so much of adscititious dignity to this particular class of individuals as enabled them to wield an almost irresistible potency in the Presidential contest of 1856; but not in favor of James Buchanan!

Meanwhile Mr. Pierce and his worse than purblind Cabinet assistants openly and unblushingly interfered in all the political elections in all the States, (a favorite expedient with the spoils-loving and degenerate Democracy in these modern days,) employing patronage everywhere in order to control votes, (thus setting the first disgusting example of this sort known in our annals,) and spreading through every part of the Republic such an abominable spirit of huckstering and corrupt political bargaining as even Walpole, in the palmiest days of his guilt-besmirched glory, had never been able to call into

existence. In less than a twelvemonth after Mr. Pierce's induction into the Presidency every man of solid understanding, both in Congress and elsewhere, who had aided this ill-starred scion of the Granite State in his efforts to reach the Presidency, became satisfied of his utter incompetency for the performance of the duties devolved on him, and honest men everywhere were filled with mingled amazement and disgust at nearly all that was from time to time reported to them as occurring under the sinister auspices which clustered around him. For instance, such men as Daniel S. Dickinson and the lamented Justice Bronson, of New York, and many other fair-minded Democrats elsewhere of almost equal eminence, were driven, alike by a feeling of elevated self-respect and by a sentiment of genuine patriotism, into open opposition; and innumerable official blunders, Ostend manifestoes, and the like, soon rendered Mr. Pierce and his ill-assorted Cabinet as sublimely ridiculous before the world at large as the accidents of political fortune had made them powerful for mischief and impotent for any purpose of good within the confines of their own country.

A fact has now to be mentioned which I shall never cease to regret, and which at the time of its occurrence filled my mind alike with surprise and chagrin. For Stephen A. Douglas, while he was yet living, I entertained a sincere friendship and respect, proof of which I could give, if need be, that would leave no mind in the least doubt. I knew him intimately for many years. I admired his noble and manly spirit, his remarkable energy and industry, his vigor and effectiveness in debate, and his ardent love of country. I voted for him in 1860 for the Presidency of the Republic, and were the contest of that period now to recur I should do precisely as I did then. He had his faults, like other men, but these faults did not obscure the luster of his virtues, or seriously weaken his

claims to the esteem and gratitude of his affectionate and admiring countrymen. I saw Mr. Douglas for the last time in my own distant home in the Southwest, with the exception of a single other occasion, when I heard him address a large and enthusiastic meeting in the bosom of the State of Georgia. I am about to observe very briefly upon one of his acts, which I personally know that he did himself most painfully regret. I will speak of this act only as I have repeatedly spoken to himself of it in private. Of course, I am alluding to his connection with what is known as the Kansas-Nebraska bill, or rather to his agreeing to incorporate in that bill a clause repealing the Missouri compromise. It is known that for some time he was reluctant to give his assent to a proposition which he had so much reason to fear might revive the agitation which he had for so many years been laboring to assuage. I obtained sixteen years ago full evidences of the *real facts* of this case from the lips of a high-minded citizen of Kentucky, who I am glad to know is still living, and by whom the repealing proposition was first introduced into the National Senate. Mr. Douglas only agreed to become sponsor for the proposition to repeal the Missouri compromise after having been solicited to do so by certain gentlemen from the South of extreme views in regard to slavery, one of whom, at least, was a member of Mr. Pierce's cabinet. It was even whispered to Mr. Douglas that, should he yield compliance to the solicitations with which he was being plied, it would secure him the support of Mr. Pierce and his Cabinet in the then approaching Presidential race.

That the formal repeal of the Missouri compromise was a violation of the principle of finality no one will venture to deny who has read Mr. Douglas' admirably-drawn report on this subject in the Thirty-Third Congress; in which report, referring to the fact that the adopters of

the Compromise of 1850 had cautiously avoided all intermeddling with this very delicate question, he said: "As Congress deemed it wise and prudent to refrain from deciding the matter then, either by affirming or repealing the Mexican laws, or by an act declaratory of the true intent of the Constitution, and the extent of the protection afforded by it to slave property in the Territories, so your committee are not prepared to recommend a departure from the course pursued on that occasion, either by affirming or repealing the eighth section of the Missouri act, or by any act declaratory of the true meaning of the Constitution in respect to the legal points in dispute."

Mr. Pierce came into power when the country was visibly passing into a state of happy and prosperous repose. He left behind him, when he returned to private life, the incipient mutterings of a rising tempest, whose fury, though once or twice intermediately suspended for a short period, was not to receive its final quietus until after a long period of blood and carnage should have been experienced; until the evil system of servile labor, for the maintenance and perpetuation of which he had toiled so industriously, should be seen to tumble into ruin even by the recoiling of the forces employed for its support; until the Democratic cause and name should both be so discredited and enfeebled that no earthly power would ever be able to redeem them from dishonor, or render it safe or expedient to rely upon its boasted enginery either for the upholding of our national honor, or for the giving a healthful and beneficent propagation in foreign lands to the sacred principles of civil and religious liberty which our unequaled fathers have handed down to us and ours for eternal preservation.

REMINISCENCE No. X.

MR. VAN BUREN—MR. FORSYTH—MR. HOLT—MR. PRESTON—MR. PIERCE.

It is almost unnecessary that I should state that on my return to Mississippi in the summer of 1836, after the visit to Albany already mentioned, I took an active part in the Presidential canvass then in progress. Whether I rendered any service to the Democratic cause at that period in the Southwestern section of the Union it is not for me to decide.

I should ill perform the reminiscent task which I have undertaken did I not here make some mention of an individual with whom my first acquaintance was formed about this period, and in connection with the political movements then in progress. This person has since obtained much and deserved celebrity, and in the elevated position now occupied by him stands little in need of any commendation which it would be in my power to bestow on him. He has held many high official stations in the last fifteen years, and has acquired a reputation for ability which no one would think of calling in question. Joseph Holt is a native of Kentucky, and made his *entrèe* upon the political arena, as I have learned, under the auspices of the celebrated Amos Kendall, a personage whom I knew for many years very familiarly, and for whom I ever cherished a veritable respect and friendship. Mr. Holt was assistant editor of a well-known newspaper published in Kentucky of which Mr. Kendall had the chief control. At least this is what I have often heard stated by those who professed to have personal knowledge of the fact. He was afterward district attorney for some time

in Louisville, and displayed such extraordinary adroitness and skill in the prosecution of criminal offenders that it is related as a fact that the Governor of Kentucky refused to continue him in the office which he so ably filled, expressly on the ground that it was impossible for any alleged culprit to escape the undergoing of legal punishment when Mr. Holt put out his whole strength as the representative of the government. In 1836 Mr. Holt made his appearance at the National Democratic Convention which held its session in Baltimore; and when Colonel Richard M. Johnson was put in nomination for the Vice Presidency, he rose up and delivered a speech in support of his claims which is said to have surprised and even electrified all who listened to it. This speech immediately made its appearance in the newspapers, and the young Kentucky orator in a few hours experienced what Lord Byron so strikingly describes when he says, in reference to the first publication of the earlier cantos of Childe Harold: "I waked up in the morning and found myself famous." A short time after this achievement, Mr. Holt came to Mississippi, and his arrival there was productive of a most profound sensation. I well remember calling upon him a few days subsequent to his advent among us, in one of the parlors of the hotel in the town of Clinton, then a place of much importance, in company with several other gentlemen, for the purpose of welcoming him to the bosom of that then prosperous commonwealth, and proffering him our assurances of sympathy and esteem. We were all struck with the modesty of his aspect and demeanor, and we were pained to observe what we thought to be the tokens of declining health—soon, in all probability, we feared, to be succeeded by a premature decease. Mr. Holt lost no time in entering upon the brilliant forensic career which he afterward ran; and, by an extraordinary exercise of professional dili-

gence, as well as by giving constant evidence of ability, he succeeded in the short space of four or five years in accumulating a larger estate than most lawyers are able to acquire by the labors of a lifetime. I heard him very often when engaged in the argument of cases of the greatest dignity and magnitude, and I can declare with truth that I have never listened to a more brilliant or effective advocate. He always had an air of great serenity and mildness when engaged in discussion, and his countenance was generally a little shaded by what seemed to be an expression of sadness. The tones of his voice had something in them inexpressibly soft and touching; and so attractive did he often become, as he advanced from point to point, that those who heard his calm and uniformly insinuating exordium were irresistibly constrained to remain in his presence long enough to hear the last words of his peroration. He indulged less than any eminent speaker I have known in gesture, and scarcely ever withdrew his earnest gaze from the faces of those he was addressing; and, strange to say, I never saw him on any occasion cast an inquiring glance upon the surrounding audience for the wished-for tokens of approval, which is now so common a practice. It was then evident that Mr. Holt was a well-read lawyer; and the style in which he expressed himself, either to judge or jury, bore marks of very high literary culture. The contests in court which sometimes occurred between himself and the celebrated S. S. Prentiss, of Mississippi, (of whom I am generally supposed to know about as much as any other individual,) would, I am certain, have commanded attention as well as enlisted the most intense interest also even in Westminster Hall, or in the most renowned courts of the European continent, and I would now travel many miles to witness one such scene of intellectual digladia-

tion as I have formerly beheld with so much delight and admiration between these two giants of the bar.

Mr. Holt came to see me several times in Washington when I had the honor to be here in a public capacity. On one of these occasions, I remember, he was on his way to the Old World, and on another I saw him after his return, and I listened to his glowing and graphic description of all that he had been surveying, both in Europe and Asia, with the highest gratification.

It has always been a source of gratulation to me that Mr. Holt felt a deep sympathy for me in the struggle I had to wage upon the soil of Mississippi in 1851 against the efforts then so fiercely and perseveringly made for the disruption of the Federal Union; but it has been to me cause of unqualified regret that this gentleman was afterward compelled to suffer the most cruel injustice at the hands of Mr. Pierce and his ill-starred Cabinet solely on this account, with whom the strange and unnatural policy had originated of crushing out Unionism in the South and giving renewed ascendency to the secessionists of that region, notwithstanding the solemn *finality* pledge which Mr. Pierce had given before his nomination as a Presidential candidate. In this and in other instances of principle violated, I thought I then plainly discerned the boding of much of that evil which has since been experienced. Mr. Holt had made several able speeches in support of Mr. Pierce during the Presidential canvass of 1852. These had been widely circulated and had proved singularly effective; but when this gentleman's warm friends and admirers in the Southwest—of whom I was one—earnestly pressed upon the President whom we had just elected the appointment of Mr. Holt to a foreign mission of only secondary grade, it was discovered that a malign and fatal influence had forced its way even into the bosom of Mr. Pierce's shallow and intriguing Cabinet,

which rendered it alike impossible in several of the Southern States that any man previously appointed to office by Mr. Fillmore by reason of his devotion to the cause of the Union could remain in public station, or that any prominent individual could receive favor at the hands of those who were controlling official patronage who had been manly enough to declare against the secessionists in Mississippi and Georgia in the fierce contest of that period. So that the strange and monstrous spectacle was exhibited of a Government seeking to the extent of its ability to strengthen those whose parricidal hands had been so recently employed for the destruction of its own vitality!

I have seldom had an opportunity of holding direct personal intercourse with Mr. Holt since he informed me by letter of the defeat of the application made in his behalf for a mission abroad and the cause of the disappointment of his reasonable expectation in regard to this matter. We have not exchanged a word of social amity in the last thirteen years, during which a dark and devastating civil war has rolled its waves between the subject of this notice and his friend of other times. I am rejoiced to know that Mr. Holt's health has, since I saw him last, been completely re-established; and that his fame is imperishably intertwined with the honor of his country. May he live long to enjoy the advantages of every kind by which he is encircled, and never see this great and glorious Republic disturbed again as it has been since he and I sojourned amicably together amidst the hills and valleys of that far off region which the wickedness and stupidity of faction have forever despoiled of its dignity and happiness!

I witnessed the inauguration of Mr. Van Buren in March, 1837. A vast crowd was in attendance. His inaugural address was short, well worded, and to the point, and seemed to give satifaction to most of those who had voted for the new President. But even then, feelings of

dissatisfaction in connection with the fiscal action of the Government and the general financial concerns of the country were beginning to disclose themselves, and seemed to discerning eyes to bode a most disastrous defeat of the Democratic party in 1840.

Mr. Van Buren is considered to have evinced much good sense in the selection of his Cabinet. They were all worthy and pure-minded men, and had severally given proof of ability in the past history of the Republic. His Secretary of State, John Forsyth, of Georgia, was in many respects one of the most remarkable men to whom our country has at any time given birth. He first saw the light on Virginia soil, and claimed, as I have heard, the neighborhood of Fredericksburg as his place of nativity. He emigrated to Georgia early, and had scarcely attained to manhood before he began to participate in the public concerns of his adopted State. He was a lawyer by profession, and is admitted to have acquired a competent amount of professional learning at a very early period of his career, and to have shown also an uncommon aptitude for politics. He was for some years a zealous and devoted Federalist, and, like Mr. Berrien, his great rival in after times, was kept in obscurity for some years by reason of that fact. He was a warm supporter of Troup and his State rights policy during the administration of John Quincy Adams, but is said to have acted with marked moderation and decorum at that stormy period. He was afterward Governor of the State, and in 1829 came into the Senate of the United States, to which he was twice elected, and during his occupancy of a seat in that body he exhibited such singular dexterity, readiness, self-possession, and vigor in debate as attracted toward him in a remarkable manner the respect and affectionate admiration of his fellow citizens of all parties. Mr. Forsyth was a man of most commanding person; his manners were

eminently polished and captivating; his personal courage was unquestionable, and his integrity was universally confided in. Had he survived a few years longer it has been supposed by some that he would have attained the Presidential dignity itself; and had he done so his administration, I am confident, would have constituted a bright and happy period in our annals as a nation. I have often heard the great contest in 1832, at the capital of Georgia, between himself and Mr. Berrien, involving the question of nullification, referred to, and it seems to have been the general opinion among those who witnessed it that Mr. Forsyth was successful in obtaining a most signal triumph over his accomplished and eloquent antagonist. How strange it is that the monster of secession should after such a scene as this have been able to dominate over the understandings and the hearts of so bold, so practical, and so patriotic a people!

REMINISCENCE No. XI.

ANDREW JACKSON—HENRY CLAY—WASHINGTON—CÆSARISM.

There is no period of our history more marked with stirring incidents, or more replete with sound instruction, to such as may be able to review in a calm and unprejudiced manner the character and conduct of that extraordinary man, than the eight years' administration of Andrew Jackson. He was accustomed to call it "my administration;" for doing which certain silly sophisters and carping calumniators denounced and ridiculed him without stint or decency. Certain it was, that while he was the Executive chief of the nation he was "every inch" a President. He quailed not before domestic faction at home nor growling menaces from abroad. He was ever exerting himself to find out what was right and politic, and when he had resolved upon any particular course he moved forward firmly and fearlessly in the pathway of duty, never pausing even for a moment to ascertain what malignant factionists said of him, or in what manner the shallow scribblers for the daily press misrepresented and defamed him. He had but one rule of action, and that rule he found embodied in the official oath which he had taken. Regarding the Constitution, and the laws made in conformity therewith, together with our treaties with foreign nations, as "the supreme law of the land, anything in the constitutions or laws of the States to the contrary notwithstanding," he permitted no body of factionists anywhere to array themselves in arms against the just authority of the Government. It was indeed most fortunate for the country that he was known so well to be a man of indomitable courage and inflexible

firmness, for had this not been the case there was more than one occasion during his eight years of Presidential service when local demagogues of the hour would have been tempted to measure their strength with that of the Government of which he was the chosen chief. It is perfectly well known to many that in 1832, when the Nullifiers of South Carolina menaced insurrectionary opposition to the constituted authorities of the Republic, General Jackson did not hesitate openly to declare his determination to *arrest* several of the prominent leaders of the contemplated movement in Washington city, and subject them to prompt punishment should they persevere in their insane project; nor is there much reason to doubt that he would in a short time have proceeded to this extremity but for the interposition of Mr. Clay and others co-operating with him at that period, who succeeded in bringing about the celebrated compromise of 1832. I knew General Jackson well, and I am sure that a more honest, disinterested, and truly patriotic man has never lived. His mind was active, astute, and vigorous. He was a profound judge of men, and had more capacity for controlling the action of those associated with him than any one I ever knew He was a democratic-republican in principle; was a firm believer in the capacity of the American people for self-government; and had a just and enlightened regard for all "the reserved rights of the States and people;" but the fanciful and absurd notion had never entered into his head that either the States or people had reserved to themselves the right to set at naught when they pleased the authority of the Federal Government, or to break up a Union which the Articles of Confederation had declared to be "perpetual," and which the Constitution afterward adopted had expressly asserted to have been made more "perfect" by its own provisions. The weak and untenable position that the government of a nation has not full

right to coerce obedience to all its legitimate behests, and to use all needful means for the preservation of its own vitality, his sound and discriminating mind could no more have been inclined to entertain than the unheroic and dishonoring theory that a human being has no right to defend his own life against assailment, and in any manner whatever that shall be found most convenient. His demeanor in private life, as I personally know, was always kind, obliging, and courteous; he conversed in general with a modest and easy familiarity, was always profoundly courteous to the gentler sex, and tenderly mindful of all who came into his own social circle. There were subjects, though, the very mention of which always roused him to a pitch of stormy indignation, and there were several of our eminent public men in whose integrity and patriotism he had for a long time ceased to have the smallest confidence, of whom he, indeed, occasionally spoke in terms of vehement denunciation.

It has always been quite apparent to my mind that during his whole Presidential career General Jackson never once transcended the powers clearly allotted to the Executive Department of the Government; though the peculiar dangers and difficulties which he had from time to time to encounter more than once constrained him to resort to energetic expedients, and to adopt a tone and manner that called forth in full volume the objurgatory malevolence of his foes, who freely applied to him epithets that the sober pen of the impartial historian will not be found to justify. He was called a tyrant, a usurper, an imperial despot, and was charged with intending to overthrow the liberties of his country. Toward the close of his first term as President he was fiercely accused of aspiring to a third election, and some affected to believe that he would never rest satisfied until his temples should be encircled with a kingly diadem. This truly heroic and pure-minded man

is reported to have been exceedingly patient and self-possessed under this assailment, and to have rarely complained of the calumnies to which he was daily and hourly subjected. Doubtless he was powerfully sustained by the proud consciousness of his own innocence, and by the confidence which he always felt in the good sense and in the generous instincts of the American people. He could not but remember, also, how Washington himself had been traduced in a similar manner, and how signally his reputation had triumphed in the end over the industrious malice of his foes. No one, I am certain, now supposes Andrew Jackson to have been deficient either in integrity, in patriotism, or in a true devotion to the cause of civil and religious freedom. No one now censures him for having used all his constitutional powers for the preservation of the Union against those who sought so causelessly in 1832 to overthrow it. Nobody now suspects him to have been guilty of *corruption*, because, under the independent treasury system which he had set on foot, innumerable defalcations occurred among such as were trusted with the keeping of the public money. No intelligent and patriotic man now laments that he vigorously maintained the principles of law and order against the anarchical attempts made during his administration to undermine and uproot them. No man of sense now believes that he was desirous of enjoying a third Presidential term, though it is certain that he did not deem himself bound, in the circumstances which surrounded him, to make a premature announcement of his intention to retire. Had he done so, nothing is more certain than that the various factions who had opposed particular branches of his policy, though differing among themselves in regard to several essential matters, would have had it in their power to coalesce for the defeat of that very policy. It was never positively known that Jackson would not be a

candidate for a third term until he had become certain that Martin Van Buren was almost sure to be nominated; who, he well knew, if elected to succeed him, might be confidently relied on for the maintenance of those principles which he regarded as indispensable to the national safety and repose. Had he acted otherwise than he did in reference to this matter I should, for one, have considered him seriously to blame. That we have now a republican government at all is perhaps owing to his firmness and resolution at this delicate and perilous conjuncture.

I am really not informed, in any authentic way, that this illustrious personage would have allowed himself to be presented for a third term under any circumstances. I know perfectly well that he felt a profound respect for the character and example of Washington, who on due reflection determined to retire to private life after the end of his second term. But it would be greatly wronging General Jackson not to admit that he must have been perfectly aware that there was no clause in the Federal Constitution positively making the President ineligible for a third term. The fact that the framers of that instrument had, after the fullest consideration, refused to adopt such a clause, raises an irresistible presumption that those wise statesmen foresaw the possibility that some exigency might arise which would make it desirable that a President who had served two terms should be continued in office for four years more. What the nature of that exigency should be which would justify a departure from the example of Washington as to this matter I am myself by no means prepared to decide; but I am sure that I can imagine one which would have compelled even Washington himself to have become a Presidential candidate a third time. Had he believed at the period of his retirement that there was a political party in the United States in close alliance with

the French Jacobinical faction, (as many supposed to be the case in 1796,) and that this party would succeed in electing some such person as Robespierre, Danton, or Marat to the office of President, unless he should himself consent to enter the field against him, I do not at all doubt that Washington would have felt it his duty to forego his own ease and happiness in order to secure his country from the evils which the elevation of such a monster would inevitably have brought upon it. I conjecture that Jackson would have acted in the same manner had he seen any such evils likely to arise in consequence of his withdrawing altogether from the political arena. So again, I fancy, would it have been with the mild and unambitious Madison himself had he seen the Federal party, with all its sins of the war of 1812–'15 upon its head, about to organize anew for the purpose of electing some anti-war man of the Hartford Convention stamp to the Presidential office, under whose rule a new series of alien and sedition acts and other legislative enormities might perchance be attempted, and could he have been in addition satisfied that no man thoroughly identified with the war of that period except himself would be strong enough successfully to resist the reactionary tide. Let the Washingtonian rule be as sacred as any one may choose to consider it, (and surely I do not at all underrate that sacredness,) yet I opine that this, like all other general rules, would be subject to that rule above rules, *exceptio probat regulam.*

Thank Heaven, the hero of the Hermitage was saved from this fearful test, for he was able, without resorting to means at all questionable, to secure the casting of the Presidential mantle upon the shoulders of Mr. Van Buren, and, ere he took leave of public life forever, had the gratification of hearing from the lips of this gentleman before a hundred thousand citizens that celebrated *pledge* that in performing the Presidential functions he "would tread generally in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor;"

so that Jackson was able to return to his own quiet home in Tennessee with the conviction resting upon his mind that he had left "this great Republic prosperous and happy." There he lived for eight years more, surrounded by all that could render his declining years peaceful and contented.

No two public men in the United States were, perhaps, more hostile to each other for many years than were Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson, and yet were they strikingly alike in some of their leading attributes. They were both men of warm temperament, brave almost to a fault, patriotic, devoted to their friends, truthful, honest, lovers of their kind, staunch supporters of the Union, and willing to make almost any sacrifice for the maintenance of republican institutions.

I wish it were in my power to record here that they were cordially reconciled before leaving the troublous stage of action whereupon each of them had borne so distinguished and so meritorious a part. This much I can with truth state, as being within my own knowledge, that when, in 1850, citizens of the Democratic faith from remote sections of the country beset Mr. Clay for the purpose of cheering him on in the patriotic labors that were then imperiling his life, they often said to him, with tears in their eyes, "Oh, Mr. Clay, how much you remind us of the lamented Jackson!" Nor did this sort of salutation prove unpleasant to him who was the recipient of it; but, on the contrary, he always expressed himself on such occasions as exceedingly gratified.

It is known to many that Mr. Madison first tendered the commission of major general, afterward bestowed on General Jackson, to Mr. Clay. Had he accepted it and fought successfully the battle of New Orleans, as he doubtless would have done, how different might have been his own political fortunes, and how different the history of our country!

REMINISCENCE No. XII.

JAMES BUCHANAN—ROBERT J. WALKER—JACOB THOMPSON—WILLIAM M. GWIN—STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.

The sectional agitation which Mr. Pierce's Administration had, despite all the pledges by which it was bound, managed to call forth anew, was raging with much violence when Mr. Buchanan came into the Presidential office. This latter gentleman having been for several years abroad had been able to keep his mind free from all the excitements of the period, and having good reason for believing that Mr. Pierce's failure to obtain a renomination had been greatly owing to his indiscreet, and indeed unpardonable, discussion in his messages and otherwise of the dangerous questions put to rest by the compromise settlement of 1850, it would have been, indeed, surprising had he at once proceeded to imitate the ill example of his discredited predecessor. The inaugural address which he enunciated was pre-eminently moderate and conservative in its tone, and was calculated to awaken new hope of the restoration of peace and tranquillity. The *National Intelligencer* hailed this address most rejoicingly, and proclaimed to the country that if the new President should carry out faithfully and persistently the views which he had just promulgated it would be the duty of all the true friends of the Union to yield to him a zealous and efficient support. Such, indeed, was the view entertained by patriotic and enlightened minds everywhere; and that considerable body of patriotic and enlightened voters who had sustained Mr. Fillmore in the Presidential contest of 1856 almost unanimously declared their determination to present no opposition to Mr. Buchanan's Administration so long as he should continue

to show himself alike exempt from free-soil extremism and the equally dangerous dogma of pro-slavery propagandism. Never was a President of the United States more favorably situated than was Mr. Buchanan in the spring and summer of 1857 for conducting the Government upon broad, national principles, and securing to himself the glory of permanently pacificating a long distracted country. That such was his original ambition and aim I have never at all doubted; and his well-known instructions to Governor Walker, whom he had dispatched to Kansas for the purpose of harmonizing the elements of discord there, then in active fermentation, gave most gratifying assurance to all the lovers of peace and political brotherhood that, come what might, the influence of the Government would never be wielded for the encouragement of sectional factions of any name or complexion, but be used for the upholding of the fundamental principle of self-government which our fathers had established, even by the outpouring of their own precious life-blood.

In order to understand the causes of Mr. Buchanan's sudden and most lamentable departure from the line of policy which he had prescribed to himself in the outset of his presidential career, it will be necessary for a moment to examine, in a spirit of dispassionate scrutiny, some of the qualities which entered into the composition of his own remarkable character, and to pass rapidly in review, also, the peculiar obstacles which he very soon found to set his pathway.

I knew James Buchanan for many years, and intimately. During Mr. Polk's excellent and very successful administration many occurrences took place which of necessity brought Mr. Buchanan and myself into close and familiar contact. Having been twice elected by the National Senate to the position of chairman of the

Committee on Foreign Affairs, I had to consult with him often and in the most confidential manner. He professed to entertain for me a warm personal friendship, and I never had reason to doubt the sincerity of his professions in this regard. I had every opportunity, alike in private life and amid the turmoil and excitement of political controversy, to learn his real temper and character, so as now to be able to speak of them with something approaching to authority. He was undoubtedly a man of solid and vigorous intellect, without having the least claim, though, to be ranked as a man of genius. He was said, (and so I suppose the fact to have been,) to be accurately informed in the legal profession, and well adapted to all the ordinary duties of a provincial American advocate, though no one would, I am certain, have thought of claiming for him a profound acquaintance with jurisprudential science, or have expected from him a great and luminous argument upon legal questions of particular difficulty and perplexity, and especially of such as had not been already made the subject of repeated adjudication. His knowledge of the ancient classic writers was exceedingly imperfect, and he was far from being at all familiar with any of the renowned British authors who, in prose and verse, have filled up the space of years between Chaucer and Macauley. When a member of the Senate of the United States, though his intellectual powers must have been then in their prime, he was not known to deliver a single speech remarkable either for eloquence, for potential reasoning, or for valuable practical illustration. He was notably deficient both in ingenuity and in rhetorical brilliancy. I do not think he ever uttered a genuine witticism in his life; though, on social occasions, he was often more or less facetious, and, in what Dryden calls "the horse-play of raillery," was indeed quite an adept. Nobody, though, ever heard him talk stupidly or ignorantly; and

whenever a subject chanced to be introduced with which he felt himself to be unacquainted he had the good sense to be obdurately and unmovedly silent. He was far from being one of those who "wear their hearts upon their sleeve for daws to peck at;" in colloquial scenes he very rarely expressed his opinions at all upon disputed questions, except in language especially marked with a cautious circumspection almost amounting to timidity. In the ordinary scenes of social life he was exceedingly simple and unassuming, exhibiting occasionally, but never in a positively offensive manner, a sort of blunt and homespun frankness and familiarity which many persons found more or less agreeable.

That he was himself a man of inflexible integrity I do not think admits of question; though it is yet not altogether forgotten, and perhaps never will be, that in the earlier part of his political career he had been known once or twice to have become involved in perplexing predicaments which exposed him to the suspicion of being a little insincere and ambidextrous in matters of political management. Fame had long set down Mr. Buchanan as having been a Federalist in the days of his opening manhood; but this charge he had always positively denied, and was accustomed to refer those who inquired of him relative to this matter to what he deemed a decisive negative fact—that he had marched as a common soldier from Lancaster to Baltimore for the defense of that city from British invaders in the war of 1812–'15. He had long been desirous of reaching the Presidential station; had once or twice actively, but unsuccessfully, sought a conventional nomination; and was perhaps at last indebted for his being selected as the chief standard-bearer of the Democracy to the fact that his long absence from the United States was supposed to have neutralized ancient antipathies in his own bosom, and to have saved him from the

discrediting responsibilities of Mr. Pierce's egregious maladministration.

Mr. Buchanan had always professed to hold in great horror the doctrines of the extreme State's rights school of the South; had often ridiculed, even on public occasions, the far-famed resolutions of '98, and professed an ardent love of the National Union, which sentiment he doubtless felt. I very well recollect that he wrote to me an earnest and patriotic letter in the autumn of 1849, in favor of the Missouri compromise as a basis of settlement applicable, as he thought, to the questions then engaging the public attention, and that he wrote another letter during the summer of 1850 in full approval of the plan of adjustment then before Congress. But he had, in some way, learned to dread the fierce audacity of the Southern fire-eaters, as he was accustomed to call them, and it several times became obvious to me, long before he fell under their domination in 1860, that his fear of the leaders of this blustrous and menacing faction was not wholly unmixed with something of a respectful admiration.

He was, as a general thing, exceedingly truthful and confiding, and delighted more than any public man I have known in what is sometimes called "cronyship," but, unfortunately, selected often as the special partners of his counsels men of very small mental caliber and who had recommended themselves to his regard mainly by their adroitness in the arts of adulation, to the influence of which arts he was indeed most lamentably open. It is a fact perfectly well known to me that General Cass, who occupied under his administration the office of Secretary of State, and whose accomplishments and prolonged public experience, no less than the honesty of his nature and his extraordinary powers of intellect, should have commanded for his opinions the most profound deference, had far less influence over Mr. Buchanan's official action than Howell

Cobb or Jacob Thompson—a fact which of itself speaks volumes in explanation of those prodigious blunders which were soon to render the close of Mr. Buchanan's Presidential term the most melancholy period in our annals.

In the summer of 1857 I reached Washington from California, where I had been sojourning for four years, and found Mr. Buchanan and his Cabinet in a very excited and anxious state touching the troubles then in progress in Kansas. Governor Walker had been there carrying faithfully into operation the instructions under which he had been sent to that region, which instructions Mr. Buchanan had even drawn up in his own handwriting.

In further explanation of this matter I will call to the notice of those who are honoring these reminiscences with a perusal a short extract from a volume which I published seven years ago, none of the material statements contained in which have ever yet been, so far at least as I am informed, at all impugned:

"Just about this time certain leading politicians in Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina commenced a course of open and unmeasured denunciation of Mr. Buchanan on account of his having sent Governor Walker to Kansas, and on account of the acts of this latter personage as Governor of the Territory, charging the President with the basest ingratitude to the Southern States and people, to whose support they asserted him to have chiefly owed his elevation, and menacing him in addition with such opposition in Congress and elsewhere as would speedily bring him to punishment for the gross infidelity which they accused him of having exhibited toward his political benefactors. Fearing very seriously the effect of these movements upon Mr. Buchanan, whom I well knew to be morbidly sensitive to public reproach, and solicitous, beyond the wise sedateness of statesmanship,

to please everybody, I had now visited Washington, hoping there to find out whether there was any likelihood of the administration's recoiling from the attitude which it then occupied. There I soon learned, from the lips of Mr. Jacob Thompson and others, that though Mr. Buchanan had been much galled and mortified by the course pursued toward him in the Southern States, he was resolved to stand firmly by Governor Walker and non-intervention in Kansas, whatever might be the consequences of his doing so to himself personally, or to the future prosperity of his administration. Mr. Thompson having himself expressed strong fears that in the Southwest, particularly in Mississippi and the adjoining States, Senators Davis and Brown, and others in alliance with them, might succeed, if not promptly counteracted, in misleading their fellow-citizens touching the Kansas *imbroglio*, I volunteered to go in that direction myself, for the purpose of employing such influence as might yet remain to me, after a four years' absence, in furthering a cause which I had ever had so much at heart. I set out accordingly, and journeyed at once to the city of Memphis, where, being invited to address my fellow-citizens, I attended a large popular assemblage, convoked under the auspices of the most influential public persons in that vicinage, over which the eminently patriotic ex-Governor Jones presided, and in a harangue of several hours' duration I called the attention of those present to the then existing condition of public affairs, and labored to show them that it was the true policy of the South, as of the whole country besides, to yield to Mr. Buchanan the most zealous and unremitting support at that perilous conjuncture. The address which I delivered on this occasion, with the evidences of popular approval which the suggestions embodied therein had elicited, in manner and form precisely as the same were set forth in the news-

papers of the vicinage, I took occasion to transmit directly to Washington for Mr. Buchanan's examination, and quickly moved on to the capital of Mississippi, confidently expecting there to obtain a similar indorsement of the non-intervention attitude of the administration. On reaching this place, and on learning that the two Mississippi Senators, Messrs. Davis and Brown, had both addressed a large public meeting at the Capitol the evening before my arrival in Jackson, and that each of these gentlemen had denounced Mr. Buchanan in unmeasured terms, I accepted an invitation to speak at the same place the very evening after; having done which, and having procured similar testimonials of approval of the President and his non-intervention policy as I had obtained at Memphis, I forwarded these also to Washington to the address of the Hon. William M. Gwin, then in that city, to be handed over to Mr. Buchanan for his encouragement. It was unfortunately of no avail that these efforts to *reassure* Mr. Buchanan were at that time essayed by myself and others; he had already become thoroughly *panic-stricken;* the howlings of the bull-dog of secession had fairly frightened him out of his wits, and he ingloriously resolved to yield without further resistance to the decrial and villification to which he had been so acrimoniously subjected. In point of fact, a week or two thereafter the Hon. Glancy Jones, of Pennsylvania, a well-known and confidential friend of Mr. Buchanan, published in the newspapers a letter in which the first significant foreshadowings appeared of the President's determination to go over—horse, foot, and dragoons—to the secession faction."

In common with thousands of others I had now become seriously alarmed at the condition of the country. I knew well that a scheme for the destruction of the Union had been long on foot in the South. I knew quite

as well that the leaders of this movement were only waiting for the enfeebling of the Democratic party in the North, and the general triumph of Free-soilism as a consequence thereof, to alarm the whole South into acquiescence in their policy. I was satisfied that if that most unwise and corrupt measure, the Lecompton constitution, should be approved in Congress, on the recommendation of Mr. Buchanan and by the votes of Democratic members of Congress, the Democratic organization in the States of the North, already sadly weakened and demoralized by the causes heretofore enumerated, would forever lose its power for usefulness, and dwindle into just such a wretched and discordant faction as it has ever been since. I felt, as many other persons felt also, that the attempt now making in Congress to force through the infamous Lecompton bill would permanently dishonor the South, which would now, for the first time in her history, be justly accused of having given her deliberate sanction to a trickish and dishonest attempt to fasten slavery upon an unwilling and fiercely-resisting people by a fraud which no one could deny to have been perpetrated. With such views and feelings I visited Washington during the session of Congress of 1857–'58, and immediately had recourse to General Cass and others who stood high in my confidence, and protested solemnly against the action which has just been described. General Cass at once confessed, frankly, his entire condemnation of Mr. Buchanan's conduct in the Lecompton matter, and earnestly besought me to go at once to him and remonstrate solemnly against his further perseverance in the mad course which he had been induced to adopt. This I, of course, declined doing unless the President should do me the honor of asking my advice, which I felt it to be certain that he would never think of.

Thus, by this most disgraceful procedure, and several

others of a kindred cast, adopted at that period, did the Democratic party forever lose its dignity as a great national organization and sink down into a mere sectional faction, powerless for all real good, yet fearfully potential for evil.

There are one or two incidents of this period which I will relate here as strikingly illustrative of the condition of things then existing. I went one day into the Department of the Treasury on official business. When this had been concluded, Howell Cobb turned to me and said that he hoped I would do what I could to aid the Administration in carrying through Congress the Lecompton bill. I asked him what prospect there was of its being adopted. To which he responded briskly: "Oh, I think that we shall get it through. We have now secured almost as many votes as will be necessary to its passage; and you know that this Department is always, in such a struggle, good for at least twenty votes." "Great God!" I said, "and has the Democratic party sunk so low as to seek to procure the adoption of a measure notoriously corrupt in itself by administering official bribes to the trusted representatives of the people?" This was the last familiar conversation I ever held with this once loved and respected citizen of Georgia.

A night or two after I chanced to attend a party at the house of the British Minister. I was passing through one of the most crowded rooms, when I saw a special coterie engaged in animated conversation. The distinguished Jeremiah S. Black, then Attorney General, was one of the group, and the lamented Mrs. Greenough another. As I passed, this good lady called to me and said: "We are discussing a question, Governor, in relation to which I should like to know your opinion. I am insisting that Mr. Buchanan ought to be brought forward a second time for the Presidency; what think you as to

this matter?" To which I responded, I fear, in a style a little too abrupt: "Why, madam, Mr. Buchanan may be entitled in the estimation of his admiring friends to a renomination, but could he with *honor* accept it, having heretofore given a deliberate and public pledge not to allow his name thus to be made use of?"

After Mr. Buchanan had sent into Congress two several messages earnestly recommending to that body the ratification of the Lecompton swindle, he began to grow exceedingly restless and uneasy, and I conversed with more than a dozen members of Congress, who informed me that they had just come from the White House, where the anxious President had urged them, in language almost of imprecation, for God's sake not to forsake him and the true Democratic cause at this crisis. I heard from the lips of the brilliant and eccentric Mr. Toombs, about this period, a rather amusing anecdote, alike illustrative of the uneasiness of Mr. Buchanan as to the fate of this pet scheme of his in Congress, and of his ingenuity in devising new schemes for the strengthening of his position. Mr. Toombs said that a few days before he had visited the Presidential Mansion, when the conversation chancing to turn upon the troubles then existing in Congress the poor President said: "Mr. Toombs, when I was a member of Congress some years ago, and the Democratic party was at any time hard pressed, we always went into a *caucus*, where it was ever found quite easy to reconcile discordances and secure a union of party strength. Why do you not call a Democratic caucus in Congress now? I am certain that it would be attended with exceedingly beneficial effects."

"Oh!" responded the ever-facetious Toombs, "Oh, Mr. President, you have evidently forgotten my own political history a little. When I came first into Congress as a Senator, a few years ago, I did so as a *Union Whig*. I

could not, therefore, you know, with any appearance of propriety, go into a strictly Democratic caucus until the expiration of my present Senatorial term. I have been recently elected for a new term of six years by Democratic votes. This term will commence on the coming 4th of March. Wait patiently, I pray you, for a few weeks, and I promise to be as good a caucus Democrat as ever you heard of."

On a cold and bright Sunday morning, the very day before I left Washington for the South, I met Mr. Buchanan on the street-side. He was just returning from Senator Bright's on foot, whither he had escorted his charming daughter from church. He was looking very well, and seemed quite cheerful. He advanced and saluted me quite cordially, and complained that I had not been to see him. To which I answered: "Mr. President, I should, under circumstances a little different from those now existing, have delighted to call upon you." I added, "Mr. President, I shall be off for the South tomorrow, and I wish I could return to my own home without carrying with me feelings of great uneasiness in regard to the condition of the country. I fear that this Lecompton experiment has been fatal to the Democratic organization of the North; that the Republican party will signally triumph in the Presidential election of 1860, and that the secession leaders of the South, with whom you now seem to be in close alliance, will sieze the opportunity which will be then afforded them of attempting to destroy the Union. Mr. President, I know the men upon whom you are now relying better than you do; as sure as there is a God in Heaven you will be compelled to fight against them for the maintenance of the Government itself before your term of Presidential duty shall have drawn to a close."

He responded, evidently with much embarrassment, pretty much as follows:

"Let me say to you, sir, in frankness, that should such dangers arise as those to which you refer, I shall know how to do my duty. In 1852 I sought the Presidential nomination at the hands of the Democratic party. In 1856 this nomination sought me. I made no effort to procure it. My position is therefore one of independence, and should any body of men anywhere attempt to subvert this Government whose executive chief I am, I shall know well how to deal with them, and the whole Republic will find me religiously faithful to the great trust with which I have been invested." I replied: "I doubt not the goodness of your intentions; I trust that you will prove in all respects equal to the perilous conjuncture which I am sure is not far distant; but I fear much that you are confiding in the friendship and integrity of some who will fail you when the moment of greatest danger shall arrive."

So saying, I bade him good-by, never to see him more on this side the grave.

What difficulties he had afterward to encounter; how he joined at the White House, a month or two after, in the silly rejoicings which there took place over the adoption of what was called the English bill; how he openly took part in the efforts made in Illinois to defeat Mr. Douglas; how he yielded his countenance to the proceedings in the Charleston convention, which fatally broke up the unity of the Democratic party; how he gave his indirect sanction to that monstrous alteration in the national Democratic platform, confessedly intended to give to slavery an "aggressive attitude;" how he entertained in the White House the secession leaders when they were on their way to Baltimore, after they had disgracefully abandoned their seats in the Charleston con-

vention, because of the nomination of the high-souled and heroic Douglas; how the attempt was made in Charleston by the opponents of this noble martyr to the cause of principle to call to the Presidency of the Union the man who in 1851 had arduously sought to destroy this Government, and who was known to all the world to be thoroughly committed to the fearful dogma of secession; how several of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet afterward aided in the secret concoction of a scheme for the overthrow of a Government with which they had a close official connection, and co-operated in an effort to murder that sacred Constitution which they had solemnly sworn to support; how Mr. Buchanan himself was persuaded ingloriously to relinquish all attempts to maintain the authority which had been intrusted to him, on the absurd ground that the Government founded by our sage forefathers had been given no power of *self-protection* against lawless and unprovoked violence, are matters which already belong to history and which the bloody occurrences of a fratricidal war have engraved in characters more durable than brass itself upon the hearts and understandings of all America.

REMINISCENCE No. XIII.

WM. H. SEWARD—ABRAHAM LINCOLN—CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

I have arrived at a very interesting point in the history of the past. A very striking and peculiar character now comes up for our special observation. Few men have done or said more to secure the lasting remembrance of mankind, either for the good that he did or the good that he failed to accomplish, than William H. Seward. I was well acquainted with him, without ever having possessed his full confidence, and without ever having desired to possess it. I was never his personal enemy. The relations existing between us never rose to the dignity of friendship. I always looked upon him as a considerable figure upon the picture of political and social life in this country. I regarded him as a man of many peculiarities, and made him a special object of my study from the moment of my being introduced to him on a steamboat descending the North river, in New York, up to the period of his departure from the realms of mortality.

I shall speak of him as I think, and as I have continuously thought of him now for twenty-five years, "neither extenuating nor setting down aught in malice," being duly mindful of the words of Antony over the dead body of the murdered Julius: "The evil which men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones. So let it be with Cæsar!"

William H. Seward was undoubtedly one of the best educated young men on this continent when he left his father's home for the sunny plains of Georgia, and he there discharged the duties of a vocation held in peculiar honor in all truly civilized and refined communities under the

sun. I have never doubted that he himself derived as much of improvement from his occupation as a schoolmaster in the days of his early manhood as it was possible even for his pupils to do under that industrious and skillful performance of his preceptorial functions, for which he has been given credit. The knowledge which he had himself acquired at college became more thoroughly engrafted upon his memory, and must have assumed a more digested and orderly character, adapting it more conveniently to the practical uses of life. I should not pronounce, though, that he ever became a thoroughly ripe scholar, being in this respect, as I venture to suggest, greatly inferior to Rufus Choate, Edward Everett, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, Caleb Cushing, John Quincy Adams, and some others whom it would be easy to name. He was the maker of many speeches, but he had written far more than he had spoken; a truth which no one will be disposed to question after having learned that he wrote much which was never orally enunciated, and that he never spoke what he had not already first written. His style of composition had many excellencies, and but few positive faults. He wrote in a clear, polished, and vigorous style, seldom using more words than were necessary to express his meaning, and rarely leaving his meaning so involved in ill-selected words as not to be easy of apprehension, even to an ordinary reader. He possessed in a high degree as a writer both the *suaviter in modo* and the *fortiter in re*—never, or very rarely, running into the error confessed by Horace, in his "Ars Poetica," when he says: "*Breve esse laboro; fio obscurus;*" while it must be admitted that he never rose to the dignity and elegance of a Cicero or a Macaulay, and never exhibited the grandeur or profoundity of a Burke or a Webster. He was a good deal given to facetiousness, but I never heard him utter a decidedly brilliant witticism in my life. His memory was

most extraordinary, and he kept it in good condition by constant exercise. His capacity for reasoning upon any given question was far superior to his judgment of either men or things. He did not seem to me to be so desirous of ascertaining the exact truth about any matter of dispute which he professed to be seeking to elucidate, as to make the most plausible showing possible for the side of the question which he had himself espoused. His temperament was cold and unexcitable; he had really no intense emotions, and he therefore never fell into the language of passion. His imagination was dull and sluggish, though he had labored hard to lash it into activity. He had indefatigably sought to fill his memory with the beauties of speech which had originated in other minds, but without being able completely to assimilate what he had thus borrowed with his own native stores; so that when he was ambitious of adorning his elocution with figurative illustrations he wore the air of a frigid and passionless reciter of the fine utterances of others far more than he did that of a sublime and electrical enunciator of grand ideas and startling sentiments originating in a moment of peculiar inspiration in the mind of the orator himself. The labor of a lifetime might have qualified him, perhaps, almost to have written such a work as that bequeathed to the world by Quintillian; no amount of industry, no concurrence of fortunate circumstances, could ever have enabled him to attain a height of oratorical excellence which might suggest to the minds of those who listened to him the propriety of comparing him to a Demosthenes, a Cicero, a Chatham, or a Clay. His manner as a speaker was far below his matter in point of dignity and impressiveness. His person was diminutive; his face was almost beardless; he had a cold gray eye, which never glistened with excitement, and never mellowed with sympathetic emotion; his movements, when on his legs, were

awkward and shambling; his voice was husky and indistinct; he read in a cold and overstrained manner what he had carefully prepared for the occasion; or, if he uttered several paragraphs from memory, without referring to the elaborate notes which he had prepared, he had ever and anon to throw his eyes upon the paper before him so as to be enabled to go through with what he called his speech. Such a discourse as this, delivered in the manner I have described, might pass very well for a lecture, but it is as far from being such oratory as the rhetoricians of old have described as anything which could be possibly imagined.

I have heard Mr. Seward, more than once, when violently assailed in the Senate, declare that it had long been with him a rule of life never to grow angry under coarse and unjust decrial, and never to retaliate words of personal insult. I can well believe this statement to be true. Whether he was always able to avoid the feeling of resentment under supposed injury may be a question, and I confess that I am among those who suppose him to have been, in a quiet way, an exceedingly good hater.

He had a great and peculiar turn for what is called *diplomacy*. The order of his mind admirably fitted him for the cool and subtle discussion of questions growing out of international intercourse; and I doubt not that his correspondence with American Ministers abroad whilst Secretary of State will pass down to posterity with distinguished honor, and be read by generations yet to come with instruction, with entertainment, and even with ever-increasing admiration.

I do not at all agree with those of the present day who attribute the whole administrative policy of Mr. Lincoln to the personage of whom I am now speaking. Abraham Lincoln was far better fitted for the general functions of the high office which he filled with so much credit to him-

self, and with such lasting honor to the Republic, than William H. Seward would have shown himself to be had he ever attained the Presidency. I should rather be inclined to attribute the zigzag and blundering administration of Andrew Johnson to the unhappy inspiration of his renowned Secretary of State. It was the ambitious and contriving mind of the great political manager of New York which originated the "my policy" series of measures adopted by the maladroit Johnson in order to reconstruct the States just coming out of the rebellion before Congress could come together for the purpose of settling the *modus operandi* of a proceeding which unquestionably belonged to the legislative department of the Government. In fact, Mr. Seward, in a well-known and carefully prepared speech of his, delivered at his own home in New York, during the summer or autumn of 1865, asserted in the most emphatic manner that the reconstruction policy of Johnson, which many persons then thought might prove a great success, had originated with the antecedent Administration. This was evidently intended to secure to himself the credit of having controlled both Administrations. It is certain that Mr. Seward warmly approved of President Johnson's whole course, up to the day of his leaving Washington for the mountains of East Tennessee. He attended him in that romantic and most memorable ramble made by the enterprising Johnson, when he was "swinging" so ominously "round the circle." He aided him in the huge attempt to get up a third party at Philadelphia, which was expected to secure the election of Andrew Johnson for a second Presidential term. He co-operated heartily with Andrew Johnson in that most unwise and ungracious act of setting aside the noble compact of surrender agreed upon between General Sherman and General Joe Johnston, which the lamented Lincoln would certainly have ratified most cordially had he con-

tinued to live, and the execution of which would, seven years ago, have restored all the States and people of this Republic to their condition of primeval tranquillity and brotherhood. Mr. Seward, it should never be forgotten, sent by telegram to Washington city the evidence of his warm approval of the silliest and most malignant speech which even Andrew Johnson ever made; I allude to that one delivered by him on the night of the 22d of February, 1866; after the pouring out which, he became, in the exalted station which he occupied, utterly powerless for any good whatever, and even the prolific source of woes innumerable. Oh, no! let William H. Seward have all the honors awarded to him which he justly deserves to have; but let us not "rob Peter to pay Paul;" let us not deprive the martyred Lincoln of the glories which so splendidly encircle his name, and which, next to Washington himself, in my judgment, over all other Presidents which the country has yet known, he deserves to have accorded to him by the children and the children's children of those for whom he toiled, thought, and died.

The best specimen of Mr. Seward's prolific pen is perhaps "The Life of John Quincy Adams." It is indeed a most readable and instructive volume, does full justice to the character and public services of the eminent statesman whom he has undertaken to depict, and, I am glad to know, is most generously appreciated by his accomplished son, whose respect and admiration for Mr. Seward may be supposed, on a recent occasion, to have assumed a somewhat extravagant form, without gravely calling in question either the feelings of his heart or the general soundness of his judgment.

In the last days of the session of Congress, terminating on the night of the 3d of March, 1849, Mr. Douglas, of Illinois, raised an important test question in connection with the bill, then on its passage, for the organization of

the new Territory of Oregon, by the introduction of an amendment providing for the extension of the Missouri compromise line of 36° 30′ to the Pacific ocean. Mr. Seward, being very much opposed to such a settlement of the pending question of slavery as this amendment contemplated, before even he had yet taken his seat in the national Senate, occupied himself very industriously in securing the defeat of this measure, an account of which exploit he immediately thereafter published, over his own signature, in the *National Intelligencer*. In illustration of his conduct on this occasion, it is due to Mr. Seward to publish the following extract of a speech of his upon the compromise measures of 1850. He said: "It is insisted that the admission of California shall be attended by a compromise of questions growing out of slavery. I am opposed to any such compromise, in any and in all the forms in which it has been proposed, because, while admitting the purity and the patriotism of all from whom it is my misfortune to differ, I think all legislative compromises which are not absolutely necessary radically wrong and essentially vicious."

Mr. Seward delivered a very remarkable speech in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1848, in which he said: "There are two antagonistical elements of society in America, freedom and slavery. Freedom is in harmony with our system of government and with the spirit of the age, and is therefore passive and quiescent. Slavery is in conflict with that system, with justice, and with humanity, and is therefore organized, defensive, and active, and perpetually aggressive."

These are words of very striking import, and, joined with Mr. Yancey's noted declaration in 1860, that the time had come to make slavery aggressive, may prove very worthy of calm consideration among the generations hereafter to inherit the free soil of America. It is quite

a remarkable fact that a little more than ten years after the Cleveland speech Mr. Seward himself became a zealous advocate of compromise.

There was one portion of this same Cleveland speech which was of a highly inflammatory tendency, and plainly menaced civil war; on reading which one can hardly help being struck with the remarkable contrast apparent between the spirit therein displayed by Mr. Seward and that breathed by Mr. Burke when saying: "We ought to act in political affairs with all the moderation which does not absolutely enervate that vigor and repress that fervency of spirit without which the best wishes for the public good must evaporate in empty speculation."

During my stay in Washington pending the discussions on the Lecompton bill heretofore referred to—that is to say, in the winter of 1858—I had the unexpected honor of being invited to a well-known *restaurant* in that city. Of course I did not refuse the kindly summons, and proceeded at the time appointed to the place specified. Before I had reached the banqueting hall some special information was communicated to me which I will now proceed to narrate. General Nelson, the personage who figured so prominently in Kentucky and Tennessee during the late war, and who was so unfortunately killed in private combat at Louisville by that General Davis who has recently been winning so much renown on the Pacific slope, when walking to the Capitol, on the morning immediately preceding the dinner scene presently to be described, had accidentally encountered a well-dressed Englishman, of rather an eccentric appearance and manners, who inquired in a decidedly *cockneyish* style, as was reported to me, the way to the room in which the Supreme Court of the United States was holding its sittings. After the desired information had been supplied, a sort of miscellaneous conversation

sprang up between General Nelson and his supposed London acquaintance. He resolved to go with him to the Supreme Court-room, that he might there see more of him. While sitting there, it struck him that a very funny banqueting scene might be gotten up, if he should draw up a card of invitation to the aforesaid son of "The Fast-Anchored Isle," requesting him in the name of several distinguished members of Congress—easy to be obtained—to accept, that very evening, a social repast, to be given in honor of her Majesty, Queen Victoria, and the British people. This invitation had been very courteously accepted, and when I reached the designated place of social *reunion*, I found an exceedingly gay and splendid company assembled. The English guest was of course occupying the seat of honor, and at different parts of the table were to be seen Vice President Breckinridge, William H. Seward, Colonel Orr, the late Minister to Russia, who was then Speaker of the House of Representatives; Lewis D. Campbell, of Ohio; the celebrated Humphrey Marshall, of Kentucky; Albert Pike, the erudite lawyer, the brilliant colloquialist, and of late, as I am glad to learn, the author of a most profound and entertaining work on Comparative Philology; General Nelson himself, and this reminiscent. Dinner had already commenced when I reached the arena of action, and the first glass of wine was about to be drunk. A *sentiment* preceded it, which, being in honor of her gracious Majesty, the Queen of the British realm, called her loyal subject to his feet; when, without the least embarrassment, in as easy, dignified, and graceful a style as either Lord Chesterfield or Lord Palmerston could have exhibited, he poured forth an impromptu response which was in all respects a perfect masterpiece of its kind. The whole company was manifestly thrown aback by a display so unlooked for. After a while the wine began to circulate very freely; glass after

glass was drunk with hearty good will, while choice anecdote, brilliant repartee, and songs, both merry and pathetic, served to enliven the occasion. Just as the company was rising from the table, Mr. Seward, who had already contributed at least his full quota to our entertainment, rose, and with more than usual gravity, asked to be permitted to offer a sentiment, to which all the company assenting, he said: "Gentlemen, it has been my fortune to occupy a seat in Congress, as you all very well know, for many years, during which period I have made one of many genial meetings like the present. I lament to say, gentlemen, that it has uniformly happened heretofore on such occasions that the concord and agreeable hilarity of the dinner scene have been more or less marred by the unhappy introduction of irritating sectional topics. To-day nothing of the sort has occurred, a circumstance to me exceedingly gratifying. I now give you, gentlemen, the following sentiment: 'May many such pleasant banquets as this hereafter occur among us, and may none of them be interrupted or rendered less agreeable by the introduction of sectional topics.'"

REMINISCENCE No. XIV.

LINCOLN—BUCHANAN—DOUGLAS—JOHN SLIDELL.

It is with feelings of peculiar solemnity that I proceed to state some recollections connected with the coming of Abraham Lincoln into the office of President of the United States. This event stands inseparably connected with others of the greatest and most painful import. I hope, in mentioning my own remembrances of the various matters alluded to I may do injustice to neither the living nor the dead; but a frank and unvarnished exposition has become necessary of certain occurrences which have too long been the subject of the grossest misrepresentation, and, therefore, the source of much error and of much suffering. Abraham Lincoln was by birth a Southern man, having been born on the soil of Kentucky. He was in the beginning of his career poor and obscure, and had to work for his livelihood. He was an attorney by profession, and had so conducted himself amid the multiplied temptations which beset the vocation in which he had enlisted as to be everywhere recognized in a very special manner as an *honest lawyer*. No suspicion was ever breathed as to his intregity or truth. He is known to have been personally brave, and it was universally understood of him that while never insulting any one, he never quietly submitted to indignity or outrage. In all respects he was a man of sound and unimpeachable morality, and he had ever proved himself an affectionate and attentive husband, a tender and providing parent, and a firm and steadfast friend to all for whom he had once professed amity. I doubt if there ever was a more upright and reliable person on the soil of this continent than the individual of whom I am now writing. He was not an

abolitionist, in the ordinary sense of that word, at any period of his life, though he had always disapproved of slavery in all its forms, and would at any time have rejoiced to see it brought to an end in all the States of the Union, in some peaceful and constitutional manner. He was a firm and inflexible supporter of the Constitution of the United States, and had no inclination to disturb any of its guarantees so long as that instrument should remain unaltered. He was, doubtless, sagacious enough to understand that African slavery, existing as it did in the United States in opposition to the almost universal public sentiment of the civilized world, could only be expected to be maintained under the protection of the guarantees just referred to; and he must have always understood that whenever slavery should become decidedly *aggressive* in its character, and should attempt to extend itself by unconstitutional means, this would be almost certain to lead to its speedy overthrow. He did not believe that slavery could be legitimately carried to the territorial domain of the Government outside the States wherein it was already established, and he fully concurred with Mr. Clay, Mr. Webster, and others that Congress, having exclusive legislative jurisdiction within the District of Columbia, it was competent for that body to discontinue it there whenever it should be judged expedient to do so. While the fugitive slave law should continue to exist he was in favor of enforcing its provisions even within the limits of the free States themselves, and he is not known to have made any strenuous effort to procure its repeal. In truth, Mr. Lincoln was little more than a Whig of the Clay and Webster stamp, and warmly supported Mr. Clay in all his attempts to reach the Presidential office. When he ran against Mr. Douglas for the United States Senate, only a short time before he became a candidate for the Presidency, it is well known that Mr. Buchanan, the leader and repre-

sentative of the Democracy of that period, openly sympathized with him in that contest, and urged various gentlemen of some ability as speakers to visit the State of Illinois and aid in securing the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Senate of the United States in preference to Mr. Douglas. I was myself positively assured by Colonel Carpenter, a gentleman then very favorably known as a stump-speaker in the West, that he had canvassed Illinois against Mr. Douglas at the earnest request of Mr. Buchanan, and upon a positive promise of the Commissionership to China if he would perform this duty—a post, however, which was not, in the sequel, bestowed upon him, and of the failure to confer which Mr. Carpenter most vehemently complained. John Slidell, well known in Louisiana for many years as a corrupt tamperer with popular elections in the interests of the Democracy, openly confessed to me, in the city of Memphis, on his return from Illinois, where he had been exerting himself for the defeat of Mr. Douglas' Senatorial aspirations, in presence of from fifty to one hundred respectable citizens, that he had used money freely in Illinois for the overthrow of Douglas, avowing at the same time his anxiety to see Lincoln elected over him. So that it is quite evident that at this time even Mr. Lincoln's avowed political foes entertained great personal respect for him, and regarded his presence in the Senate of the United States as altogether desirable. It is well known, both to myself and others in Mr. Douglas' confidence, that he always entertained a very high opinion of Mr. Lincoln's abilities and character; and, I am credibly informed by persons of the highest standing, that an hour or two after the delivery of President Lincoln's inaugural address Mr. Douglas approached him and declared his warm approval of all that he had uttered on that occasion.

Let it be borne in mind that the intriguing politicians

of the secession stamp had labored with great assiduity in the Charleston Convention to defeat Mr. Douglas, because of his firm adherence to the ancient Democratic platform; that they had urged the adoption of a resolution, as part of that platform, providing for the positive *intervention* of Congress in the vacant Territories of the Union in favor of slavery; that this resolution was afterward adopted in Baltimore; that in connection with these proceedings the Presidential ticket, upon which were inscribed the names of Breckinridge and Lane, was put in the field; that it was openly avowed by Mr. Yancey and others of the secession stamp at this very time that they had little expectation of electing the ticket they had formed, but hoped to defeat Douglas by the means they were using for that purpose; and that Mr. Yancey, the great secession leader of that period, had more than once declared, with his own characteristic frankness, that if Mr. Lincoln should be elected to the Presidency, even by a mere plurality of votes, he and his political *confreres* would immediately, upon that pretext, attempt to withdraw the Southern States from the Union. Consider, too, that Mr. Buchanan and his Cabinet had been all along openly abetting these movements; that several of the members of his Cabinet had already become thoroughly compromised in various ways in the secession scheme; that menaces of armed resistance to the Government had been made in various forms, and that all were denounced in advance as dishonored men who would accept office of any grade or character at the hands of Mr. Lincoln.

Now, let us examine for a moment the conduct of Mr. Lincoln—the extreme moderation and forbearance shown by him—bearing in mind all the while that the declarations which he solemnly made at this time were, for reasons already given, entitled to the fullest confidence. In his speech at Indianapolis, the first of many which he

delivered on the way to Washington city, he used this language:

"What, then, is coercion? What, then, is invasion? Would the marching of an army into South Carolina without the consent of her people, and with hostile intent toward them, be invasion? I certainly think it would be invasion, and coercion also, if South Carolina were forced to submit. But if the United States should merely hold and retake her own forts and other property, and collect the duties on foreign importations, or even withhold the mails from places where they were habitually violated, would any one or all these things be invasion or coercion?"

Again he said, at Pittsburg:

"I repeat now, there is no crisis except such a one as may be gotten up at any time by designing politicians. My advice to them, under the circumstances, is, to 'keep cool.' If the great American people keep their temper on both sides of the line the trouble will come to an end, and the question which now distracts the country be settled, just as surely as all other difficulties of a like character which have originated in this Government have been adjusted. Let the people on both sides keep their self-possession, and just as other clouds have cleared away in due time so will this great nation continue to prosper as heretofore."

How wise and considerate are all these suggestions, and how impressively applicable to certain over-excited districts of our country at the present time! Would that the fierce zealots who are raging now so wildly in one or two vicinages in the far Southwest would act the part then so impressively recommended! Oh! how I should rejoice to see our countrymen everywhere exercising that coolness and self-possession, never forgetting for a moment that this is a land of government and law, and that the sacred and unavoidable duty of those invested with authority is to maintain the principles of law and order at all hazards; for without this we are indeed all completely wrecked.

In Philadelphia, at Independence Hall, Mr. Lincoln concluded a modest and dignified harangue thus nobly:

"Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there need be no

bloodshed or war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say, and in advance, that there will be no bloodshed, unless it be forced upon the Government, and then it will be in self-defense."

What could Washington himself have said more patriotic and pacific had he been in such a situation as that at this moment occupied by Mr. Lincoln?

But in his inaugural address he gave still fuller assurances to the whole country as to the course intended to be pursued by him. In the opening portion thereof he said:

"Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that, by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property and their peace and personal security will be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that 'I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no intention to do so. Those who nominated me and elected me did so with this and many similar declarations, and I had never recanted them. Moreover, they placed in the platform, for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the emphatic resolution which I now read:

"'*Resolved*, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as the greatest of crimes.'"

Then, after adding, that "all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and laws," could "be given, would be cheerfully given to all the States, when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause, as cheerfully to one section as to another," he referred to the clause in the Federal Constitution relating to the returning of "fugitives from service," and said:

"It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves, *and the intention of the lawgiver is the law.* All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution, to this as well as any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves 'shall be delivered up' their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not, with nearly equal unanimity, frame and pass a law by means of which they could keep good that unanimous oath?"

He presently proceeds to say:

"I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservation, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed, than to *violate* any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held unconstitutional."

How could any reasonable Southern man have demanded any stronger assurances than these? They are positively stronger and more comprehensive than any previous President had found it necessary to give, and Mr. Lincoln's *character*, was, after all, really the best *guarantee* that they could possibly have possessed.

Referring to his duty to maintain the Government he says:

"I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as a declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself. In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it is forced upon the national authority."

He closes his address in these noble words:

"My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject; nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.

"If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it.

"Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it, while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either.

"If it were admitted that you, who are dissatisfied, hold the right side

in the dispute; there is still no single reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken the favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our difficulties.

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you.

"You can have no conflict without making yourselves the aggressors. You can have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect, and defend' it.

"I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break the bonds of affection.

"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

It would indeed seem that this memorable address should have had a most soothing and reassuring influence upon the minds and hearts even of those who stood already committed to extreme measures, and who had made secret preparations for the daring and mad experiment which was soon to be essayed. Mr. Calhoun had demanded a new constitutional guarantee in behalf of slavery before California was admitted into the Union as a *sine qua non* to the continuance of the Union, and his hot-headed disciples of 1860 made the same demand, and upon its not being yielded, they immediately commenced war by ordering that the fort at Charleston should be fired upon. The day will surely come when this will be looked upon universally as the most unjustifiable and unwise proceeding which has ever marked the history of a civilized and Christian people. This I have for one always thought and shall never cease to think, though circumstances beyond my control afterward drew me and other known friends of the Union into a most deplorable attitude, for the assumption of which, even for a single instant of time,

I shall never entirely forgive myself, albeit a magnanimous Government has already pardoned the offense.

In reference to the unfortunate result of the efforts in Congress in the spring of 1861 to obviate existing dangers I shall venture to offer one or two remarks here.

Mr. Crittenden's well-known resolutions of compromise could, doubtless, have been obtained, but for the fact that certain Southern Senators, five in number, (evidently by preconcert,) when the motion to substitute the two resolutions of Mr. Clarke in lieu of them was voted on, *refused to vote at all;* when, had they voted, as they ought to have done, Mr. Clarke's resolutions would have been defeated by a vote of 28 to 29, and Mr. Crittenden's must have been afterward adopted. When the last test vote upon Mr. Clarke's substitute was taken in the Senate just before the session terminated, Crittenden's resolutions of compromise were defeated by a vote of 20 to 19, a number of Southern Senators having meanwhile, with equal want of true wisdom and practical fidelity to the South, resigned their seats in Congress and returned to their own homes to aid in consummating the work of secession, then in active progress. It is due to Mr. Seward to state that, though before that perilous moment opposed to all compromise, he now introduced a proposition in the Senatorial committee of thirteen which, had it been accepted in behalf of the South, and incorporated into the Federal Constitution, would certainly have given permanent security to the slaveholding region, though it would just as certainly have *perpetuated* the evil of slavery. It was in these words: "No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress any power to abolish or interfere in any State with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to service or labor by the laws of said State." To this proposition, as is now well known, Mr. Davis, of Mississippi,

and Mr. Toombs, of Georgia, refused their assent in committee, these gentlemen having other *fish to fry* in the neighborhood of Montgomery, Alabama!

I have been compelled to give these statements of fact, to most persons, doubtless, quite well known heretofore, in order to open the way for the presentation hereafter of some curious reminiscences, which might not otherwise be so fully appreciated.

REMINISCENCE No. XV.

MR. DAVIS—MR. SEDDON—MR. BENJAMIN.

Themistocles, when on a certain occasion a teacher of the art of memory tendered his services to him as an instructor, is reported to have said that he should greatly prefer becoming possessed in some way of the means of forgetting all things of a disagreeable nature, and is said somewhat proudly to have rejected the proffered aid. Cicero professes to admire much the greatness of mind displayed by the illustrious Athenian in this instance, but does not hesitate to say for himself: "*Non sum qui oblivionis artem quam memoriæ mallem.*" Without committing myself absolutely on this delicate point, and recognizing in the fullest manner the correctness of Tully's definition of memory when he says of it: "*Memoria est per quam animus repetit illa quefuerunt—thesaurus rerum inventarum,*" yet must I say that I should very gladly forget forever all that was so sad and humiliating in the insane and ruinous career of what was ten years ago known as the Government of the Confederate States of America. And yet are there one or two facts in addition to those already very hastily alluded to which I do not feel at liberty to exclude altogether from the observation of such as may be curious in reference to the trying scenes through which a deceived and misguided people had so painfully to pass. I shall be as concise as possible in dealing with these matters, and I shall state nothing the proof of which is not easy to be adduced.

When Mr. Benjamin was compelled to forego reappointment to the Secretaryship of War by the continual complaints made in Congress and elsewhere of his gross offi-

cial misconduct, Mr. Davis was persuaded to appoint to the vacant place a gentleman of rare qualifications and of extraordinary moral worth—Mr. Randolph, of Virginia, a grandson of Thomas Jefferson. During this gentleman's occupancy of the Department of War his conduct was eminently exemplary, his high ability was constantly displayed in the performance of his arduous official duties, his industry was most untiring, and he gave the most indisputable evidence, every day and hour, of his remarkable virtues and of his disinterested devotion to the cause which he had espoused. He was a man, though, of singular independence of spirit, and though sufficiently deferential toward those to whom he was officially responsible, yet he possessed far too elevated a feeling of self-respect and too much regard for his own well-established fame to become the mere slave of a vain and arrogant Chief Magistrate. So, in a short time, the public learned with regret that General Randolph had resigned and gone into private life, and that Mr. James A. Seddon, also a native of Virginia, had shown himself so indecently regardless of the honor of the "Ancient Dominion" as to allow himself to be foisted into a place from which his noble predecessor had been ousted by such cruel ill-treatment.

From a man who had been willingly inducted into office in a manner so discreditable of course not much was to be expected, either of manly and efficient service, or of official purity and disinterestedness. The career of Mr. Seddon, as Secretary of War, will long be remembered by all who ever entered the War Department at Richmond while he sat enthroned therein. It may be safely asserted that he did not possess a single one of the qualities needed for a creditable and useful performance of the duties now devolved on him. He was never able to learn even the ordinary routine of official business,

and often scornfully declined attending to matters of the most urgent importance. He was as arrogant and insulting to those who approached him in his official sanctum as he was notoriously servile and fawning to his own executive chief. He evinced, from his very entrance into office, an utter disregard of all constitutional obligations, and in the exercise of the authority committed to him he proved himself to be the most heartless and ruffianly tyrant whom I have ever yet seen in the possession of official power. Though he had always been an ardent State-rights man in *profession*, it soon became evident that he had never sincerely cherished the smallest regard for the principles embodied in the well-known State-rights creed, and he habitually trampled under foot, and without the least appearance of a blush upon his livid and atrabilious visage, all the anciently recognized muniments of State sovereignty. I shall not now go into a minute specification of this man's offenses. It is perhaps sufficient to state that he enforced with the most unfeeling rigor all the most stringent and oppressive enactments of the Confederate Congress in connection with forcible impressment and conscription; that in many known instances he went far beyond the scope of these enactments, while in others he criminally relaxed the law in order to accommodate special friends or the members of his own family connection; that he was an earnest advocate for the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, and that when this writ was suspended in a manner completely to uproot everything like civic jurisdiction in every nook and corner of the unhappy South, he eagerly took advantage of the condition of things to fill the prison-houses everywhere with as good citizens as any the South contained, and to compel individuals to do military duty, in violation of the most solemn governmental compacts. This was especially true in regard to

the six or seven thousand volunteers from the State of Maryland, who, after enlisting, without persuasion from any quarter, in the Confederate service for a limited and specified period, after the expiration of this period were rudely seized upon by the myrmidons of the War Department with a view to compelling them to re-enlist, under the penalty, should they refuse to do so, of being tried and punished as for desertion. It is even true, within my own knowledge, that when that firm and upright judicial magistrate, Judge Haliburton, undertook in certain cases to grant writs of *habeas corpus* in behalf of some of those persecuted Marylanders, and manifested a disposition to do them justice as far, at least, as was in his power, the rampant tyrant at the War office evinced an open disregard even of the authority of the Confederate district judge; and that officer was even informed, in the columns of the recognized Government organ, (the *Sentinel*,) which doubtless spoke *by the card*, that the Secretary of War would pay no earthly regard to the most deliberate adjudications of the court in which he presided. And yet Mr. Davis retained Mr. Seddon in office, amid continual indications of popular indignation and disgust, from month to month, and from year to year; nor would he have removed him at all but for my formal exposition of the fact on the last day of my appearance in Congress, (which fact stood verified by his own official records,) that he had recently caused himself to be paid, by the hands of his own official subordinate, $40 per bushel for his whole crop of wheat for the year 1864, while he was, by the instrumentality of forcible impressment, compelling the farmers of North Carolina, Georgia, and other States to yield up their wheat to the Government officials at the very inadequate price of from $7 to $9 per bushel, in Confederate paper. My exposition was made in Congress one morning, and the next morn-

ing Mr. Seddon resigned; but all the facts then adverted to by me had been well known to a special committee of the House for several months, whose decided action on the subject I found it impossible to obtain, such was the slavish submissiveness of the hour, and so terrific had Mr. Davis and his Pretorian bands become.

As chairman of a special committee of the Confederate Congress, organized at my own instance, for inquiring into cases of alleged illegal imprisonment, I obtained from the superintendent of the prison-house in Richmond a grim and shocking catalogue of the persons then confined there, amounting to the number of several hundred, all of whom stood charged with only suspected infidelity to the Confederate cause, and these had been arrested, not on oath of any kind. Just as I was about to take proper steps to have these poor creatures discharged, Mr. Davis' demand for a renewed *habeas corpus* suspension was yielded to, and the door of hope forever closed upon these victims of despotism, most of whom died in confinement. This case of suffering was really almost equal to that of the famous Black Hole of Calcutta!

It is a notorious and undeniable fact that Mr. Seddon, as the incumbent of the War Department, did actually interpose in a manner most rude and unfeeling to prevent the Confederate lines from being passed by ladies of the highest respectability, desirous only of carrying their infant children to school in Maryland and other States, where the ordinary means of education yet survived, hoping in this way to save them from a portion of the worst horrors of the unhappy war then in progress. This I assert upon my own personal knowledge, and am prepared to give names and dates when called on for that purpose.

Mr. Seddon had been at one time a member of the Federal Congress. There he had signalized himself as a furious State-rights man. In the celebrated Peace Con-

ference of 1861 he distinguished himself by going beyond all others in demanding additional guarantees for the protection of the slave-holding interest. Just before he received the appointment of Secretary of War he had been very badly beaten in the Petersburg Congressional district by a gentleman of more conservative views.

This person I had accidentally met on Pennsylvania avenue, in Washington, in the summer of 1850. He had the presumption to tell me that he intended to go to Mississippi in order to report to my constituents there my gross misrepresentation of them in Congress in connection with the compromise measures of that period. I immediately told him that I would meet him upon the questions involved in these measures before his own constituents, in Richmond, but he did not deem it prudent to take up my challenge.

Such are some of the beauties of secession; and such was the arbitrary and tyrannical conduct of those who had attempted to break up the Federal Union in order to avoid the imaginary danger of *consolidation!*

To show the spirit of imperial domination then raging in Richmond I will relate a curious anecdote, for the truth of which I personally vouch. One morning, very early in the day, I was walking through the Capitol grounds in Richmond, when I met a respectable officer in the employment of the Confederate Government, who at once inquired of me whether Mr. Davis ever got drunk. I told him I thought not, and inquired his reason for propounding this question; to which he responded as follows: "Mr. Davis, Mr. Mallory, and others had visited Drewry's Bluff on yesterday. When the company reached Rocketts, on their return, Mr. Davis, not finding his carriage there to meet him, as he had expected, determined to go home on foot. His lady was accompanying him. They had to pass the Lib-

by Prison in their route. When they reached this well-known spot, where it would seem that Mr. Davis had never been before, it being twilight, the sentinel on duty before the prison door would not have been able at once to distinguish the Confederate chief even if he had been previously familiar with his august person. But in point of fact he did not know him at all, never having seen him face to face in his life. He challenged the newcomers accordingly, as was to have been expected. Upon this Mr. Davis announced that he was Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. Says the sentinel: 'I wish I knew this to be true, but really I do not know Mr. Davis, and I can not allow you to pass;' when Mr. Davis, drawing his sword-cane, sprang toward the sentinel with fierce and angry menaces upon his lips. The sentinel pointed his piece directly toward his person, and would have shot him, then and there, but for the prompt and fearless interposition of Mrs. Davis, who, assuring the honest soldier upon her honor that this was Jefferson Davis, and her husband; the sentinel, faltering under her influence, agreed to take the responsibility of letting Davis and his lady pass. And so they did; but so soon as Mr. Davis got to his home he sent for General Winder, informed him of the serious indignity which had been done him by one of his subordinates, and ordered his immediate arrest, with a view to his condign punishment. Winder respectfully remonstrated against this course of proceeding. Davis got into a towering passion, and threatened to remove Winder if he did not obey the order which had been given him immediately. Upon this the young man was arrested, and is now in custody."

I asked the gentleman who gave me this information if either of the editors in Richmond knew of the affair. He replied that he had given a full account of the par-

ticulars recited to a reporter for the *Examiner*. Fearing the effect of such a publication as was now likely to be made, I besought my young friend not to mention the matter again, and proceeded at once to the office of the *Examiner*, where I persuaded its editor not to make any publication in his paper of an occurrence so ridiculous and disgusting, and thus succeeded in getting it for the time suppressed.

I have been frequently asked whether Mr. Davis made any money by the war in which he and his associates had succeeded in involving the cotton States, and to this question I have never been able to respond satisfactorily. I know that I always expected him and Mr. Benjamin to get rich by the war, and I often ventured to predict that they would be found whenever the Confederate cause caved in to have provided largely for themselves in Liverpool, whither the Confederate Government had sent considerable amounts of cotton. Mr. Benjamin's sudden flight to England immediately on his decamping from Richmond was to my mind always quite a suspicious circumstance, knowing well as I did that devoted fondness for money which he had evinced even from his earliest boyhood. Mr. Davis' subsequent movement in the same direction was a strong confirmatory fact. The public is at least entitled to a fuller explanation on this subject than it has yet received; and those who advanced their all in gold and silver to the Confederate officials, when that Government was in its last agony—receiving therefor only drafts on Liverpool, *never yet met*—are fairly entitled to a juster consideration at the hands of Mr. Davis and his associates than they have yet received. I know a number of instances of this kind, over which my heart has bled, and for the honor of human nature it is to be hoped that something will yet be done to alleviate such unmerited sufferings. There is one consider-

able fund about which I personally know something, and in reference to which many persons would now like much to know more than I am prepared to tell them. Some two hundred thousand dollars in gold, or more, were placed in the hands of Mr. Jacob Thompson for certain war purposes, which he took with him to Canada, and deposited in the bank of Mr. Porterfield, (now a Nashville neighbor of mine of the greatest respectability.) Mr. Porterfield told me in Montreal, in the summer of 1865, that Thompson had, a few days before my arrival there, drawn out all his money and taken it with him to England. The war was then over, for Lee and Joe Johnston had both surrendered. Now, what did Mr. Thompson do with this large sum? Did he and Mr. Davis divide it between them? Did the immortal Benjamin get his share, or has the whole amount been subsequently distributed in charity among the thousands and hundreds of thousands of the unhappy people of the South ruined by following the fortunes of their once loved and honored leader, and testing with him the true value of the once venerated State-rights-secession-Democratic creed?

I once witnessed a curious scene in connection with the conscription law of the Confederate Government. A young gentleman of good family, who belonged to a well-known Quaker connection in the county of Maury, and in the State of Tennessee, had been run down by one of the official *bloodhounds* employed by the Davis despotism to collect conscripts. This young man was about eighteen or nineteen years of age; he was blooming, handsome, genteel in his manners, and well-dressed. When brought into camp he at once stated that he was of Quaker origin and creed; that he had been brought up to believe that all fighting was wrong, and that to shed blood upon the field of battle was the greatest crime of

which human nature could possibly be guilty. He was singularly intelligent, and sustained his non-combative attitude with great ingenuity and with the aid of most apposite citations from Scripture. General Manney, the commander holding this interesting young man in charge, came to me at Chattanooga, and told me how much he was perplexed and agonized with this case, and requested me to visit the young prisoner in camp and talk to him. So indeed I did. My conversation with him was a long and public one. I could not overcome his objections to enlisting, and to the last he refused to bear arms in the fratricidal war then going on. General Manney did not shoot him, as the conscript law directed; his humanity forbade this. The young man underwent great sufferings of every kind for some months, and the war at last ending he returned to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and the society of his family. I have seen him repeatedly in the last year or two. He recently obtained a patent for some useful invention, and is now a prosperous and happy citizen.

Will our hot-blooded and mercurial Southern people ever be persuaded to try another secession experiment, or will they hereafter remain firmly and immovably attached to the flag of their fathers? Will they not resist the first efforts of the over-zealous devotees of party to draw them into an attitude antagonistical to the Constitution and laws of their country?

REMINISCENCE No. XVI.

MR. LINCOLN—MR. DAVIS—GENERAL JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON—GENERAL SHERMAN.

The most censurable act ever performed by Mr. Davis as the chosen chief of the Confederate Government has been already alluded to, but not expatiated on. President Lincoln, with that true humanity of spirit and genuine magnanimity which belong to all great and elevated characters, had traveled from Washington to the mouth of the James river to tender just and generous terms of peace to his insurgent fellow-citizens. These terms had been distinctly made known to the Commissioners whom Mr. Davis had been compelled by stress of circumstances to send to him for consultation. The Commissioners, bound up by prohibitory instructions to the contrary, had been able to make no peace. To return without having attained the object which at least two of these gentlemen had so much desired to effect had doubtless been to them a source of much unhappiness and chagrin. But yet undoubtedly some progress had been made, for it had been ascertained that the most mild and liberal terms would be accorded to the people of the Confederate States; indeed, almost any terms consistent with the maintenance of the Union. They might well have hoped, when on their way back to Richmond, Mr. Davis, in whom most unfortunately the whole power to treat for peace had been centered, would gladly embrace the opportunity of stopping the effusion of blood and restoring the blessings of concord and brotherly amity. If they expected this they were most painfully disappointed, for so soon as Mr. Davis heard what had been the kind and conciliatory language of Mr. Lin-

coln, he at once said that it must not be known either to Congress or the people of the insurgent States that a just and honorable peace had been found to be a practicable thing, but the truth must be concealed from those so well entitled to know it, and a vile falsehood most cruelly promulgated. So a meeting was convoked for that very night at the African Church, in Richmond, where he and Mr. Benjamin both attended and made known to those assembled the fact that Mr. Lincoln had only agreed to accept their absolute submission, and would give no guarantee whatever of his future good treatment of those who had been enlisted in rebellion. A viler or more mischievous fraud was never perpetrated, but the success of the movement was complete, those assembled at the African Church relying on the solemn but utterly false representations of Mr. Davis and his Secretary of State, and supposing that the continuance of the war was now inevitable, unless they were prepared to submit to permanent dishonor and never-ending servitude. So a deluded and betrayed people resolved to renew the struggle for independence with fresh energy and determination!

There is nothing else so disgraceful as this known in history, and coming generations will be sure to credit these monsters of iniquity with all the precious lives destroyed, and all the devastation afterward committed in the further progress of the war.

Mr. Davis having adroitly managed to attract the attention of Mr. Lincoln and his Secretary to himself as the only possible medium of pacification, and having awakened in Mr. Lincoln's mind some hope of a speedy termination of the war, the mission which I had undertaken was completely baffled.

Generous men will excuse my here briefly stating that when, after delivering a four-hours' speech in the Confederate Congress, in which I took occasion solemnly to warn

my unfortunate countrymen of the danger then menacing them, and of which so many of them seemed to be wholly unconscious, and fortifying my prophetic foreshadowings of the early fall of Richmond by the solemn citation of that well-known couplet from Campbell:

> "The sunset of life lends a mystical lore,
> And coming events cast their shadows before."

I left that doomed city, and in a few days addressed a letter to Mr. Speaker Bocock, in which the following language occurred:

"SIR: In an hour or two, if some unseen impediment does not arise to defeat the execution of my present design, I shall cross the majestic river upon the banks of which have reposed for many generations the ashes of my forefathers, and in all probability visit the city of Washington, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not it is practicable to obtain for the people of the Confederate States an early and an honorable peace, after the most bloody and exhausting struggle of arms, and in all respects the most deplorable one, which has yet found record upon the page of history. No human being save myself is responsible for this movement, nor should I have undertaken it but for the well-known fact that the two Executive departments, at Washington and Richmond, have relations with each other which render it almost impossible that regular diplomatic intercourse should occur between them, and the additional fact that the two houses of the Confederate Congress seem to be altogether averse to the doing of anything whereby a cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace and amity may be secured between those who, in my deliberate judgment, should never have allowed themselves to be drawn into a war so unnatural and fratricidal in its character, so destructive of the best interests of civilization and Christianity, and which, should it continue to be prosecuted for four years more, must inevitably, from the operation of war itself, result in the establishment of two of the most grinding despotisms the world has yet known. Should I succeed in my present undertaking, my country and the cause of freedom will be materially benefited. Should I fail, discredit, ridicule, and even contempt will be most surely visited upon me in full measure; even many sensible and good men will recognize me as a mere visionary projector; while the envious, the illiberal, the malevolent, the ignoble time-servers of the period, the slavish idolators of power, will not scruple to denounce me as a traitor to what is known as the Confederate Government. For all this I am prepared, as I likewise am prepared to undergo trial for alleged treason

to the Government of the United States, should those now occupying the seats of authority in Washington city deem this to be the fitting treatment of a voluntary embassador of peace. I hope that it will not appear either vainglorious or egotistical in me to declare further that should it be my fate to die upon the scaffold in consequence of my undertaking a mission sanctioned by some of the wisest and most virtuous men now upholding the Confederate cause, I feel, notwithstanding—though my sufferings will awaken most probably but little of commiserative sympathy in any quarter—that in passing from the stage of mortal existence, I shall be able sincerely to exclaim in the language of classic poesy:

* * * 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.'"

The public has been long apprised that my Washington city trip was rudely intercepted; that I was held in military custody for several days by order of Mr. Davis; that I was afterward discharged on *habeas corpus;* that I yet persevered in my original determination to obtain peace could it be obtained on honorable terms; that with a view to this end, in cold and inclement weather, and amid snow and ice, I penetrated to the military headquarters of General Devin, of the Federal army, where I was courteously entertained and allowed to correspond with the Washington authorities; that failing in my efforts to obtain a declaration of the terms of peace which I was seeking, I declined giving them the names of my advisers and consociates, and submitted voluntarily to imprisonment in New York, previous to my setting sail for the European continent; that while in New York I again opened correspondence with the Government with a view to pacification, but with equal want of success, and that for reasons already stated, I then embarked for Liverpool.

From on board the steamship in which I sailed, I wrote a long and earnest letter to Mr. Lincoln, warning him of the danger which lay in his relying too confidently upon securing peace through the medium of Mr. Davis' stringently-instructed peace commissioners to the neighborhood of Norfolk, and urging him to send forth his own

proclamation to the Southern people, in which should be embodied the terms of pacification, and, among other things, I said this to him :

"I write to you from mid-ocean, while the stormy billows of the surrounding sea are every moment reminding me of that fearful scene of commotion and turmoil which I have left behind me, in a land once so peaceful and happy, but now marked so wofully with ravage and the copious shedding of fraternal blood in civil strife. Sir, allow me to say, in all earnestness and sincerity, that in my opinion the ancient classic poets have not described Neptune himself as having more power as the grand *composer* of the waves of the vexed and angry ocean than you now possess, in your high official character, for calming the troubles which at present so deplorably convulse the enlightened and patriotic freemen who inhabit our own native America. You hold the trident of pacification in your hands. May that trident be wielded with true benevolence and wisdom, and in the genuine Washington spirit!"

Seven weeks only was I absent from New York when I returned thither, after having rapidly traversed England, France, Switzerland, and Italy. The first news which I received on entering the port of New York was that of the surrender of the valiant, upright, and noble-minded Lee, an event which I had so long seen to be inevitable. Davis, Benjamin, and other well-known official personages, I soon learned, had made their escape from the Virginia capital, and were making tracks God only knew whitherward. Davis and his dapper little *attaché* tarried just long enough to make themselves ridiculous, by the formal announcement that the war would be yet vigorously prosecuted, even after Lee's own heroic heart had been forced to despair of the Confederate cause.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest."

Benjamin flies precipitately toward the sea, and passes rapidly across the Atlantic, in the direction of Liverpool, to look after the Confederate cotton sales there going on, and soon gets ready in London to publish rather a superfluous legal work entitled "Benjamin on Sales," soon him-

self as he might fondly anticipate to be enveloped in the official wig and *gown* of Queen's counsel. Davis, like Charles V, Charles II of England, and several other illustrious worthies of ancient and modern times, seeks protection from habiliments of a similar cut, but alas! in vain. He is intercepted on his way to Texas, where he had hoped to find himself soon at the head of a large and valiant army, to be composed in part of 100,000 French soldiers fresh from the spoliation of Mexico. Had he passed the Father of Waters in safety, what chance was there of his bringing back with him an armed force large enough to have reconquered the Southern States lost by the untrained and luckless valor of Lee and Joe Johnston? Had such a reconquest been consummated, what probability was there that the warm-hearted Southern people would, in a burst of convulsive gratitude, have greeted him with the cheering exclamation, "*Vive l'Empereur?*"

That he had some such vain fancy as this is certain. General Toombs told me, in fact, on my reaching Richmond, in the winter of 1861, that the ambitious Confederate President had already made out his list of field-marshals, and that, in order to defeat the imperial aspirations of his lordly civil chief, he had himself thought it most prudent to resign the Department of State, which he had for some time held, hoping that by taking a position in the army he might be able to give important aid in baffling the Napoleonic aspirations of this first champion of American Cæsarism, who, I sincerely hope and believe, will be the last.

Surely no one can now doubt that secession, or the breaking up of the States which composed this Union into separate sectional organizations must inevitably result in perpetual border wars; that border wars would necessitate the organization of large standing armies in each of the separate nationalities; whence an imperial despotism

would arise almost immediately. So that, in fact, the shortest and, perhaps, the only certain road to Cæsarism in this country passes along by the grim and turreted castle of Democratic-State-rights secessionism.

General Joe Johnston had told me in the commencement of 1864, with that ready and decisive frankness for which he is so remarkable, and in response to a special inquiry addressed to him by me, that whenever General Sherman should pass to the sea-coast through Georgia, march through South Carolina and North Carolina to the neighborhood of Grant's army in Virginia, Richmond would be able to hold out no longer, and there would soon be an end of the Confederate struggle for independence. Mr. Davis kindly opened Georgia and South Carolina to him by removing Joe Johnston from the command of the Confederate army defending Atlanta, and sending it, under the command of Hood, through north Alabama, to Middle Tennessee. Upon this insane movement on the part of Mr. Davis being made known to the Confederate Congress, I did not fail to denounce the same in language of the most emphatic decrial, for doing which I was charged by Mr. Davis' still idolatrous admirers with being both presumptuous and unjust. In General Grant's report of that campaign the following very striking language is to be found:

"General Sherman, immediately on the fall of Atlanta, put his armies in camp in and about the place, and made all preparations for refitting and supplying them for future service. The great length of road from Atlanta to Cumberland river, however, which had to be guarded, allowed the troops but little rest. During this time Jefferson Davis made a speech in Macon, Georgia, which was reported in the papers in the South, and soon became known to the whole country, disclosing the plans of the enemy, thus enabling General Sherman fully to meet them. He exhibited the weakness of supposing that an army that had been beaten and fearfully decimated in a vain attempt at the defensive could successfully undertake the offensive against the army that had so often defeated it."

The double surrender of Generel R. E. Lee and General Joseph E. Johnston left no doubt whatever that there would soon be a universal cessation of hostilities. All had now been done for the support of the Confederate cause that military skill, ardent and persevering valor, and a most self-sacrificing devotion to principle could do. The soldiers who filled the Confederate ranks had for the most part not at all participated in the movements which ultimately led to armed collision between the assailants and the supporters of the Federal Union. But few of the rank and file on either side had at any time embarked in sectional controversy and strife. They were nearly all true-hearted and brave American citizens, who loved peace and social brotherhood, and had become soldiers under what, on the one side and on the other, was felt to be a sacred sense of duty. Never had more valor been displayed than marked the bloody conflicts of those four fearful and sanguinary years which rolled away after the impolitic and criminal firing upon Fort Sumter. The displays of heroism made on either side are part and portion of the "moral treasures of the country, and the whole country;" and the day will assuredly come, though perhaps not quite so soon as all liberal-minded men are hoping and praying that it may, when a general oblivion of all that is painful in the past, and a disinterested appreciation of all that was nobly and grandly done on either side, will make us all once more compatriots, friends, and brethren.

The wise and magnanimous compact of surrender, signed upon the soil of the Old North State by General William T. Sherman and General Joseph E. Johnston, I have ever regarded as eminently creditable to the distinguished commanders with whom this compact originated; and though the envy of some, and the selfish illiberality of others, may for a time have succeeded in attaching some doubt as to the policy and propriety of this much-discussed mea-

sure, there are but few if any men of sound understanding now to be found anywhere who do not regard the terms of surrender originally agreed upon as entitling both General Sherman and General Johnston to very great praise.

The delicate and truly chivalrous demeanor of General Grant in employing his honored friend and comrade in arms, General Sherman, to conduct, from first to last, the reactionary proceeding directed by President Johnson to be carried on is worthy of all praise, and is one of those high-toned and heroic acts which most dignify and emblazon the page of history.

In reference to General Sherman and General Joe Johnston, I have a few words of just commendation to offer, the utterance of which, though it may not at all benefit either of these distinguished individuals, I feel to be due to my own long-cherished opinions and feelings.

There are few men on the continent of a braver soul, of a more cultured mind, or of more urbane and gentlemanly manners than General Joseph E. Johnston. I have never yet heard his courage, his disinterestedness, or his abilities called in question; and I sincerely hope that the day is not far distant, should war again arise in the land, when this meritorious soldier will be once more found battling gloriously and successfully against some foreign foe side by side with such men as Sherman and other distinguished defenders of the Union in the recent struggle of arms, under the immortal Stars and Stripes, beneath which he has so often in other days won undying renown.

General Sherman I have long and intimately known. I first became acquainted with him in California nearly twenty years ago, where I had business dealings with him from time to time of a very important character. He was then a member of the great banking firm of Lucas, Turner & Company, which was perhaps the strongest and best regulated banking association then to be found on the

Pacific coast. General Sherman's business habits at that time were such as commanded for him universal respect and confidence; nor was there a banker in California who was more universally commended for his justice, his liberality, and his financial skill. He was remarkable for his public spirit, and manifested a deep interest in all that concerned the prosperity and welfare of his then recently adopted home. No man ever had more diligence, more activity, and more perseverance. Self-love has never, even for an instant, I am sure, predominated in his bosom over the feelings of generosity and manliness. His personal appearance is most commanding; in conversation he is frank, cordial, and obliging; he has not a particle of hauteur or arrogance, and he has the manners of a high-bred, affable, and warm-hearted gentleman. His mind is quick, vigorous, and comprehensive; and he talks with a graceful and impressive elegance upon all occasions and with all classes of our population. He has never been a zealous and acrimonious partisan in politics, and I think I have heard him say that he had never voted at a political election in his life. He is one of the most thoroughly domestic men I ever knew, and when not absorbed in his public duties he is prone, above most men I know, to seek the society of his family or that of his dear and trusted friends.

No commander on either side during the late sanguinary and wasteful war was more active and energetic than General Sherman, and few men have in any age displayed more ability as a military commander, either in the planning of grand schemes of operation or in carrying these schemes into effect. During the recent war he wrote and published several letters, which, at the time of their appearance, gave more or less annoyance to some individuals or classes of individuals. But these letters were really very well adapted to the attainment of the objects he had at the time in view. Mr. Macaulay very truly observes

somewhere, and in language which I should willingly enough recite here did I bear the same distinctly in memory, that war being the greatest of evils, the long protraction of hostilities is, if possible, to be avoided; and, therefore, as he infers, an active, vigorous, and awe-inspiring campaign may be, in general, regarded as dictated by an enlightened and far-seeing humanity. I am rarely so positive in my language as I feel inclined to be upon the point in question; and I take the liberity of declaring that I do not think that there lives beneath the sun a more kind-hearted, charitable, and genial gentleman than the distinguished subject of this notice.

When about sixteen years ago the second vigilance committee was organized in San Francisco, the Governor of the State of California, Mr. Johnson, sent General Sherman the commission of major general, with instructions to put down the forces of the committee at all hazards. He accepted the commission tendered, and issued a proclamation declaring his determination to vindicate the wounded majesty of the law; but a few hours of calm and prudent consideration of the matter satisfied him that, situated as he was at the time, with the fiscal interests of thousands under his control, it would be both unjust and unwise to retain this commission. So he sent it back to the Governor at once. I have often heard his conduct at this conjuncture referred to in conversation, and never otherwise than in terms of respect and commendation.

In the summer of 1860, I met General Sherman at the Relay House, a few miles on this side of Baltimore. We conversed for some fifteen or twenty minutes, in a frank and unreserved manner, touching the dangerous state of affairs then existing; and he agreed with me in the opinion that the secessionists of the South were determined to bring on war with the Government for the purpose of establishing slavery in the Territories. We were both quite

unhappy at the prospect then apparently opening upon the country. I recollect well that he said to me with more than ordinary emphasis: "Well, if such a war is commenced, which God forbid, I shall certainly offer my services to that Government which educated me and made me what I am." When I heard of him in the war, as I did very often, I always recurred to this interesting interview. I am satisfied that there is not a man in the Republic more absolutely free than General Sherman from everything like sectional prejudice, of which there are many and conclusive proofs.

REMINISCENCE No. XVII.

GENERAL TAYLOR—GEORGE WASHINGTON CUSTIS—THE WASHINGTON FAMILY—GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE.

In the summer of 1850 the good people of Washington determined to celebrate the 4th of July in a very special manner, and I had the honor to be invited to deliver an address in commemoration of our national independence at the Washington Monument, whither a vast assemblage came, including President Taylor and his Cabinet. I endeavored, so far as it was in my power, to accommodate the speech which was to be uttered to the peculiar circumstances of the hour, and to do what I could to harmonize discordant opinions and guard against the serious sectional collision then plainly menaced. The crisis existing was indeed one of great anxiety and peril. Dark and portentous clouds begloomed the political firmament in two opposite directions, and it was difficult to tell whether the first movements of civil strife would occur in consequence of the violent action of extremists of the North or of those of the South. Mr. Hume tells us that the "extremes are often nearer than the means," and so it proved in this instance. Mr. Clay and his friends in Congress were for immediately staunching the bleeding wounds in the body politic which had already been inflicted by the hands of over-heated zealots and selfish demagogues, wholly regardless of the public repose if they could but succeed in accomplishing their own unholy ends. What was called at the time the "Non-action" policy, in opposition to the policy of adjusting at once in some just and reasonable manner the questions growing out of African slavery, was equally favored by the extremists in Congress from

the North and the extremists of the South, which two factions were alike, and about equally, opposed to any settlement which might have the effect of giving the nation quietude and safety and restore the suspended feelings of national brotherhood. Posterity is destined to experience a deep and painful feeling of astonishment at finding that there were in the bosom of the Republic at this time so many individuals, who, upon various pretexts, were resolved to do all in their power to prolong the season of civil strife and perpetuate the evils of sectional distrust and animosity; and still more surprise will probably be felt by after generations at learning that men of the most conflicting views and wishes in the two houses of Congress were daily and hourly conferring with each other as to the means of defeating the compromise measures then pending in the National Legislature, and keeping open the field of discussion by the occupancy of which they were hoping to enhance their own local popularity. In performing the task which had been allotted to me of haranguing the multitudinous concourse which was in attendance on the day of our national anniversary, I could not but be sensible of all the delicate and embarrassing circumstances which surrounded me, and what I said on this occasion was very far, indeed, from coming up to my own wishes, or perhaps satisfying the reasonable expectations of others. It is gratifying now to remember that the noble-hearted patriot who then occupied the Presidential chair did me the honor to thank me, formally and publicly, for my poor but well-intended address, which act of noble generosity was performed by him not without visible indications of strong inward emotion. I suppose that a purer and more disinterested devotee to liberty than General Zachary Taylor has never been elevated to the Presidential station. If he committed some palpable errors in his administration of the Government, and in

some instances yielded too unreserved a confidence to tricky and unscrupulous counselors, this must be attributed altogether to his want of civic experience, and to the absolute guilelessness of his own nature.

So soon as the oration was brought to a close, General Taylor and his Cabinet left the well-shaded platform upon which they had been seated, and prepared to return to the Presidential mansion. Had they done so, in all probability he would have been still living. But the announcement being made that some traveler had just brought with him to Washington a handful of dust from the mausoleum of the famed Kosciusko, and that it was desired that all present should witness the deposit of this same dust in a niche prepared for its reception in another part of the monument, where several additional addresses would be made, the amiable President could not refuse the honor of his presence, and there he stood for more than an hour, without even an umbrella over his head for a considerable portion of the time, while the untempered rays of a noonday July sun were pouring down in full power upon him. Before the ceremonial was at an end, General Taylor was thoroughly exhausted, and going home he was tempted by the extreme thirst which he felt and his heated and languid condition to swallow down copious draughts of cold ice-water, and to partake of unwholesome viands sent hastily to him from the kitchen in a half-cooked state, which speedily brought on an attack from which he died in a few days.

The celebrated George Washington Parke Custis, of Arlington, was the principal speaker on the interesting occasion just alluded to, and was said to have acquitted himself of the task assigned in his usual felicitous manner. Mr. Custis had been long renowned as a brilliant and impressive declaimer, and even in very early life had delivered several orations in connection with the stirring

public events of the time which had awakened much admiration. I recollect especially his funeral speech in honor of General Lingan, a Revolutionary worthy who had lost his life at Baltimore at the hands of a furious political mob, amid a scene of riotous violence such as has seldom discredited the character of the intelligent and patriotic city where it occurred. I knew Mr. Custis well, and regarded him always as an amiable, upright, and accomplished gentleman. Had he been born poor, he would probably have attained great distinction in some one of the learned professions. He was a high-spirited, sociable, and patriotic personage, a devoted lover of the National Union, and a firm supporter of the Government. For the character of Washington, of whom he was an adopted son, he ever cherished the most profound veneration, and often whilst he lived did he supply the columns of the *National Intelligencer* with graphic and intensely interesting reminiscences of the Father of his Country.

Mr. Custis, in addition to his being the grandson of Mrs. Washington, was a descendant of the celebrated Lord Baltimore, under whose auspices the State of Maryland was colonized and the first formal edict of universal religious toleration adopted and promulgated. The maiden name of his mother was Calvert. After the decease of her first husband she married Dr. David Stuart, by whom she had a numerous progeny. Many of her descendants of the Stuart name, and under other names also, are yet surviving in Virginia and elsewhere. The second marriage of Mrs. Custis took place during the trying days of the Revolutionary struggle, and those who shall choose to look into the matter more deeply will find among the letters of General Washington, published under the supervision of Mr. Sparkes, a highly interesting correspondence relative to this same marriage. Dr. Stuart was the person who first called General Washington's attention to the famous

Mazzei letter, written by Mr. Jefferson, a very interesting account of which will be found in the "Life of Washington," by Chief Justice John Marshall. As this Dr. Stuart was the eldest brother of my own venerated mother, it may become me to say nothing special here in commendation of his ability, his remarkable learning, and the virtues which adorned his character.

Mr. Custis had three sisters, and no brother. Of these three sisters one married Mr. Lawrence Lewis, of Fairfax county, in the State of Virginia. Him I remember well, and I entirely concur with those who supposed him to exhibit a most remarkable likeness in person to General Washington, whose nephew he was; at least he was so much like the best pictures of Washington that he might be well supposed by one who did not know otherwise to have actually sat for them. A second of the Miss Custises married a Mr. John Law, a nephew of Lord Ellenborough, of England. Mr. Law had spent the early portion of his life in the East Indies. He is reported to have been a man of much learning and of great astuteness, but must have been also very eccentric in his temper and his habits of life. It is stated of him that his mind was in general so deeply occupied with matters of an abstract character that he became occasionally oblivious of ordinary concerns, including even his own name, and that having called one day at the post office for letters, one of the clerks there, who did not know him, inquired his name; upon which he became painfully embarrassed. "Name!" "Name!" he said, and not being able to give the desired information on the subject, he suddenly turned away from the post-office window and moved rapidly toward his home, for the purpose of there refreshing his memory, when, meeting some acquaintance who said to him, "Good morning, Mr. Law," he at once exclaimed, "Ah, that is

the name," and went back quickly to the post office to get possession of his letters there remaining.

Mrs. Peter, another sister, I knew for many years. She must have been exceedingly handsome in early life. When I last saw her, in 1851, she was a noble looking person, full of life and intelligence. It was to her that one of the most beautiful and interesting letters ever written by Washington was addressed, on the occasion of her attending the first public social party. There is a paternal tenderness displayed in this letter, set off, as it is, with an exquisite play of humor, that presents Washington in one of his most captivating aspects. No one can now read this epistle without loving this great and good man far more than he could well have done had he never seen its contents. Mrs. Peter left several descendants, who are favorably known to the history of the country. She was a woman of large intelligence and of countless virtues.

I have heretofore said something of the only daughter of Mr. Custis, Mrs. Robert E. Lee. I shall venture to mention now one or two facts in the history of her distinguished husband which are perhaps at present not fully known to all. General Lee was never a politician, in the ordinary sense of the word. He had been all his life a soldier and a faithful and efficient one. He had gained great distinction in the Mexican war, had rendered much and valuable service often on various fields of duty, and had a right to expect that when General Scott should either die or resign he would himself succeed that illustrious personage in the chief military command of the Republic. No one loved more intensely the Federal Union which his forefathers had assisted so prominently in establishing than he did. He had never given his sanction to the dogmas of nullification and secession. His mind was too sound and well regulated to render this even possible. He had done nothing whatever in 1861 or before to bring

on the crisis which he found himself now most unexpectedly compelled to meet. He saw naught whatever in the condition of the country to justify the States of the South in assuming the attitude of hostility to the General Government which most of them were now doing. He was clearly and undoubtingly of opinion that if the South had experienced grievances or was menaced with injury of any kind, it would be far better to seek relief by pacific expedients and by the employment of known constitutional remedies. He at least had no personal ambition to gratify by aiming to be the head of a grand revolutionary movement. The imagined glories of despotic military rule had no charms for him. He ardently loved his country, and every part of that country. He was greatly attached to his brothers in arms, side by side with whom he had in past times participated in so many difficult and sanguinary battles. What personal advantage could he expect to gain by the war which had been so injudiciously and madly commenced, and which no sound-thinking man could suppose was likely to have any result but that which was afterward experienced? It has been said of late that on his arrival in Washington, on the 18th of April, 1861, the command of the army of the Government was tendered him, and that he declined it. This fact I see now stated positively upon the authority of the Hon. Montgomery Blair, who must have been correctly informed as to this matter. General Lee is reported to have declined it, and General Scott is said to have thus briefly addressed him on the occasion: "Lee, you have made the greatest mistake in your life; but I feared it would be so."

Two days thereafter he announced to General Scott his final conclusion in these memorable words:

"ARLINGTON, VA., April 20, 1861.

"GENERAL: Since my interview with you, on the 18th instant, I have felt that I ought not to retain my commission in the army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend

for acceptance. It would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted all the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed. During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors, and the most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, General, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration; and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

Save in defense of my native State I never desire again to draw my sword. Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me most truly yours, R. E. LEE."

How General Lee conducted himself afterward, as a military commander, is already known to the world. What wisdom he displayed subsequently in surrendering his army after all hopes of success in the Confederate struggle for independence had become extinct is equally well known. Mr. Davis' insane proclamation from Danville afterward, calling the propriety of General Lee's surrender in question, and proposing to continue a contest in which even the most complete success would have been ruin and degradation, is one of those airy bubbles upon the surface of the stormy ocean of the past which has long since exploded, even by the force of its own ineffable feebleness.

The letter of General Lee, of January 23, 1861, written at Fort Mason, Texas, throws a still stronger light upon his painful moral struggle through which the great soul was now passing. These are his impressive words:

"I received Everett's 'Life of Washington,' which you sent me, and enjoyed its perusal. How his spirit would be grieved could he see the wreck of his mighty labors. I will not, however, permit myself to believe until all ground for hope is gone that the fruit of his noble deeds will be destroyed, and that his precious and virtuous example will so soon be forgotten by his countrymen. As far as I can judge by the papers we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert both these evils from us! I fear that mankind for years will not

be sufficiently Christianized to bear the absence of restraint and force. I see that four States have declared themselves out of the Union ; four more will apparently follow their example. Then, if the border States are brought into the gulf of revolution, one-half of the country will be arrayed against the other. I must try and be patient and await the end, for I can do nothing to hasten or retard it."

It seems to be manifest that if Virginia had refused to participate in the secession movement General Lee would not have resigned his commission in the United States army. Had Virginia remained firm, so would North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas have done, and perhaps a State or two more. General Lee would then undoubtedly have been forced by his own sense of duty to lead the Union army. It is doubtful whether, under such circumstances, the war would have lasted a twelvemonth. I hold it to be even probable that in such a case no great battle would have been fought at all. Had a short struggle of arms occurred, General Lee, after securing the true safety and honor of all the States by maintaining the Federal Union in full vigor, on the restoration of peace, would have occupied very much the same position as the celebrated Duke of Argyle did in Scotland in 1715, who, after overcoming rebellion on Scottish soil, and putting down the forces of the Pretender, had it in his power to save his deluded fellow-citizens of Scotland from immeasurable sufferings which might have otherwise fallen upon them, and which their own irritability was constantly provoking. It is easy to imagine how effective such a man as General Lee would have been, after defending the Government against armed assailment ; after his own wisdom and labor should have brought back peace and safety to that very Government, and to the whole American people, had the victorious party shown itself, in some glaring instance afterward unduly oppressive toward the fallen, in interposing for the rescue of those whom he had been compelled to chasten in war. A new MacCallummore might

have then made his appearance even in the halls of Congress, and have responded to some American Hardwicke, almost in the very words of the Duke of Argyle, when he said: "I appeal to the House—to the nation, if I can be justly branded with the infamy of being a jobber or a partisan. Have I been a briber of votes? a buyer of boroughs? The agent of corruption for any purpose or on behalf of any party? Consider my life, examine my actions in the field and in the Cabinet, and see where lies a blot that can attach to my honor. I have shown myself the friend of my country—the loyal subject of my king. I am ready to do so again without an instant's regard to the powers or smiles of a court. I have experienced both, and am prepared with indifference for either. I have given my reasons for opposing this measure, and have made it appear that it is repugnant to the international treaty of union, to the liberty of Scotland, and reflectively to that of England, to common justice, to common sense, and to the public interest. Shall the metropolis of Scotland, the capital of an independent nation, the residence of a long line of monarchs, by whom that noble city was graced and dignified—shall such a city, for the fault of an obscure and unknown body of rioters, be deprived of its honors and its privileges, its gates and its guards? and shall a native Scotsman tamely behold the havoc? I glory, my Lords, in opposing such unjust rigor, and reckon it my dearest pride and honor to stand up in defense of my native country, while thus laid open to undeserved shame and unmerited spoliation."*

That General Lee, had he been more fortunately situated, might have been able to enact the noble part herein depictured I hold to be certain; but "*circumstance*, that un-

*This speech was made by the Duke of Argyle in connection with the affair of the Porteous mob.

spiritual god and misdirector," came forward and touched his energies " with his crutch-like rod " and " turned his glowing hopes to dust—the dust we all have trod."

REMINISCENCE No. XVIII.

DUELING—MAJOR KEMP—BERNARD HOOE—DOCTOR GEORGE GRAHAM.

Bella, horrida bella.
Et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.

These prophetic words of the Cumæan sybil might well have been applied a century ago to that portion of our country situated upon the banks of our own *pater fluvium*, the Mississippi river, and its tributary streams and streamlets. For since we know that *bellum* is only a contraction of the old Latin word *duellum*, signifying *battle*—(in reference to which Cicero says: "*Antiqui nomina contrahebant, quo essent aptiora, nam ut duellum est bellum*")—the prevalence of duels, or affairs of honor, as they have been called, in our Western and Southern regions, might be in this sense sufficiently well expressed by words signifying the continued raging of bloody and ghastly wars of any kind.

But, without dwelling upon this point of scholastic criticism, let me remind the gentle reader, whether learned or unlearned, that the dueling-field was far more resorted to for the settlement of personal disputes forty years ago in every part of our much favored land than it is at the present time, and that scenes of mortal conflict, brought on not seldom for little or no reasonable cause, were far more numerous in our Southern and Western States and Territories than in the older and more settled commonwealths, in which our fathers and our fathers' fathers quietly and piously dwelt; though it can hardly be said that any portion of our wide-spread domain has been at all times entirely exempt from this abominable practice. Eminent public statesmen among the Romans, from the

earliest period of the annals of their great republic, indulged often in fierce and insulting controversy, sometimes ending in scenes of physical conflict, but nothing like a regular duel, such as known in our time, was ever thought of by the parties disputant. Demosthenes and Eschines railed at each other for hours and days together, in language far more caustic and irritating than any modern speaker has shown himself to be master of, but when this mutual objurgation was over no one apprehended that a more deadly conflict would thereafter bring about the needless destruction of human life. For some centuries past, though, in most of our Christianly civilized countries, dueling has been more or less in vogue, and is generally spoken of in them all as a relic of the days of chivalry, as, indeed, it doubtless is. Within a century past Fox and Pitt were both known to draw trigger; Sheridan fought one of the most desperate duels ever described —before, however, he attained a seat in Parliament; Curran and Flood, the great Irish orators, gave noted proof that they did not at all disapprove of this unreasonable mode of settling personal misunderstandings. O'Connell killed his man; after which, though averse to the further shedding of blood with his own hands, in a mode alike unsanctioned by the laws of God and man, he is understood not to have blamed his son very harshly for taking it upon himself to imitate his own early example. Perhaps the killing of Alexander Hamilton by Aaron Burr awakened the first decidedly retroactive feeling in this country against the practice of dueling; though it is certain that many instances have since occurred in the neighborhood of New York and Washington city, and among men of great and merited distinction, too, showing that public sentiment is not even yet so firmly established in opposition to a species of warfare so unphilosophical and

so savage, as all humane and enlightened minds would wish it to be.

In the days of my early boyhood a duel occurred within some twenty-five or thirty miles of the city of Washington, which must have produced at the time a very deep impression upon public sentiment throughout Virginia, for the deplorable result of this memorable conflict of arms is said to have been the principal cause of the excellent anti-dueling act to be found in the statute-book of this grave and dignified Commonwealth, which example of wise and wholesome legislation is well known to have been since very extensively imitated elsewhere. The affair to which I have just made special reference was the famous duel between Kemp and Hooe, of Prince William county. Hooe was a man of fine intellect, of highly respectable attainments, and of great personal popularity. I well recollect seeing him repeatedly at my father's house, and of hearing him spoken of in terms of the warmest commendation. He was a relative of my own, and was much loved and honored by a large and influential family connection. Bernard Hooe was a zealous Federalist, and had once or twice represented the county of Prince William in the State Legislature, in which body he was a great favorite. Mr. Kemp was a Democrat, and the quarrel between these gentlemen was almost strictly political. Kemp shot down his antagonist, who died immediately, leaving behind him a widow and many children, all of whom were known to me familiarly. Many a time have I participated in the reproduction of this duel, as one of a band of youthful *dramatis personæ*, in the parlor of my own home, with certain of my equals in age, and in the absence of all grown persons; and never did I go through this melancholy scene without fresh emotions of distress and chagrin.

I have seen the victor in this contest more than once. He was considerably the junior of Hooe, was also a man

of fine presence, and bore the reputation of being a warm-hearted, brave, enterprising, and intelligent young man. He is described to me to have been a deputy sheriff in the county of Prince William for some years, and to have acquired in that office much popularity.

There was in this county at that time a young lady of singular beauty and accomplishments, of the name of Graham. Her education had been well attended to, and all who knew her spoke of her temper and manners in language of the warmest commendation. She was the daughter of Dr. George Graham, a gentleman of rare accomplishments and high reputation in the medical profession. He had been educated at Edinburgh, being himself a native of Scotland, and was reported to be of good birth and affiliations in his native land. This gentleman was the third husband of my venerated grandmother, and often have I sat in his lap in childhood and been the grateful recipient of his more than fatherly attentions. After the decease of my grandmother, Dr. Graham married a Miss Hooe, sister to the Bernard Hooe whom I have already mentioned as having lost his life on the field of honor.

When in my twelfth year, I heard the Episcopal funeral service read by my father (there being no minister present) over the remains of Dr. Graham on one of the coldest winter days I ever experienced. The grave in which this excellent man lies interred is distant from the celebrated Bull Run battle-field some two or three miles only. A cannon fired by the Federal army might have transported the ball with which it was charged to the very margin of that same grave; which fact I mention particularly for a reason which will presently be obvious.

Kemp was a warm admirer of Miss Graham, and made proposals of marriage to her. The young lady was said to have been much attached to him, and to have expressed her willingness to become his wife. Friends interfered

who broke off the marriage. Miss Graham was afterward married to Mr. Bird, an old bachelor, and about the wealthiest man in Prince William county. He died in less than a year, and, as soon as decency would allow, Kemp renewed his matrimonial proposals to his former mistress, and was accepted. Bird had devised to his young wife the whole of his estate.

After Kemp's marriage with Mrs. Bird he disposed of her property, and removed to the far Southwest. He located in the neighborhood of the city of Natchez, where he became a wealthy and prosperous cotton-planter. When General Jackson marched to the defense of New Orleans he passed through the State of Mississippi. Here General (then Colonel) Hinds joined him, bringing to his aid that celebrated dragoon regiment which distinguished itself so much in the memorable battle which saved "the booty and beauty" of New Orleans from the cruel hands of the spoiler. Kemp commanded one of the finest companies in Hinds' regiment, and participated in all the glory of his illustrious commander, of whom General Jackson said in his famous report of the battle that he rode fearlessly between the two opposing hosts just before the moment of conflict, "the pride of one army and the terror of the other." Kemp returned home and lived only for a few years, leaving a number of children. Among the daughters who sprang from him was a Mrs. Howell, of whom, I am told, Mrs. Jefferson Davis is the daughter. If this be true, (and others perhaps know more of the facts now related than I could possibly do,) why, then, when Jefferson Davis rode over the Bull Run battle-field, on the day after this famous conflict of arms, he was, perhaps without being at all conscious of the fact, within a few hundred yards of that sequestered forest grave where, thirty years before, I had seen the mortal remains of his wife's great grandfather solemnly deposited!

REMINISCENCE No. XIX.

DUELS—S. S. PRENTISS—MASON AND M'CARTY—BARRON AND DECATUR—M'DUFFEE AND CUMMINS—CLAY AND RANDOLPH—PETTUS AND BIDDLE—WISE AND COKE—BENTON AND LUCAS.

Having yielded to the request of several respected friends who desired that I should give to the public some account of the duels in which I have heretofore been a party, or which were transacted under my own personal observation, I deem it expedient to declare in advance my own decided disapproval of the practice of settling individual disputes upon the field of honor, as it has been so long grossly misnamed. There never was a time when I held any other sentiments than those I now utter, and did I think that the statement of what I bear in memory touching matters of this kind would tend in the least degree to impart dignity and popularity to this enormous social evil nothing could tempt me to utter even a word or a syllable designed to preserve what I have seen or experienced in former days in connection with this most revolting subject.

So far as dueling is concerned I occupy precisely the situation which I did in reference to the late unhappy civil war. No one, I am sure, can be mentioned who more uniformly condemned the absurd and dangerous principle of secession, in support of which that war was commenced, than myself. No man ever deplored more deeply than I did the prevalence of sectional prejudices in two opposite portions of the Union, menacing, almost for a half century, just such a fearful and disastrous combustion as afterward ensued. No one ever struggled harder than I did

to prevent that fatal internecine war through which we have been doomed to pass. No man was ever better satisfied than I have been for nearly fifty years that any attempt to disrupt this Union of States and divide it into separate republics, even if successful, would be ruinous to all engaged therein, opening the way, as it would certainly do, to continued border wars, standing armies for the purpose of guarding against ever-impending attacks from without, and the ultimate establishment of a monarchical despotism in each one of the new-formed confederacies. No individual will ever be found who had clearer convictions than I have always entertained of the inevitably demoralizing influence of all wars, and especially of those occurring between people of the same derivation, language, and civil history. And yet was I drawn into that very war which I had so long dreaded and so often predicted. My nature was too weak to resist the influences which were brought to bear upon me. When the blood of my kindred began to stream upon my natal soil; when all with whom I stood connected, either by ties of consanguinity or of affinity, had taken sides in the conflict; when my beloved native State, the venerated mother of many States, and the prolific genitrix of so many men of immortal renown, broke loose from her moorings and unfurled the Confederate banner almost in view of the National Capitol, my once boasted firmness gave way. I became an earnest champion of resistance. I aided in arming my gallant young countrymen of the South against the wisest, noblest, freest Government that the wit of man has ever put in action. I did this without a sober and scrutinizing examination of all the real circumstances then in existence. I joined in making causeless and unprovoked war; war, too, under an Executive Chief whose incompetency I had long known; the selfishness of whose nature was as familiar to my mind as his wizard

physiognomy was to my vision; whose lawless aspirations to despotic power I had for many years more than suspected; and whose overweening prejudices and partialities I could not doubt would be every moment displaying themselves so long as he could anywhere find a few blind servitors willing to obey his behests and aid him in the gratification of his enormous and insatiable ambition. Yes, I entered into that war blindly and madly, with little to give me hope as to the future except the known virtue and intelligence of the Southern people and the heroic valor of that chivalrous and self-devoting soldiery whose merits and whose sufferings in behalf of a cause in which they had so impulsively entered will stand enrolled in ever-living characters upon the pages of the just-minded and philosophic historians whom future generations shall supply.

If I committed the great error of my life in joining the ranks of insurrectionary hostility against that paternal government whose magnanimity toward the conquered is at this instant calling forth plaudits from the whole civilized world, much do I rejoice that it is yet in my power to make some little atonement for my past dereliction by a free and full confession thereof, and by doing all that is now possible for me to do in binding up the yet bleeding wounds of civil conflict; in guarding the unwary against future aberrations from civil rectitude, and especially in calming the rage of ever-fermenting sectionalism; in suppressing extreme party zeal wheresoever it may be found, and in persuading good men everywhere to join as compatriots and brethren in upholding our beneficently framed, and yet more beneficently *amended* organic system, against all who may essay to overturn it by open violence, or to sap its foundations by the covert and insidious encroachments of a spoils-loving and principle-renouncing partisanship.

So, as I have said already, it is with me also in regard to dueling. I have at one time, and more than once, taken part in scenes enacted upon what men have chosen to call the field of honor, even when, as I have already declared, I utterly condemned this absurd and barbarous mode of settling individual disputes. I found a vicious state of public sentiment existing in the Southwest when I went thither to reside in 1825, and I weakly and criminally yielded to it in opposition to my own inward convictions of right and propriety. I sorely regret all my sins in this regard, and offer now to make all the atonement in my power by asking forgiveness of a high-minded and generous public.

It has long been with me a subject of warm self-gratulation that I have never yet been so unfortunate as to take away human life upon occasions of this kind, for had I done so, even had the whole world joined in forgiving me, never should I have forgiven myself.

It seems to me to be the most surprising delusion that has ever entered the mind of a sane human creature that in a land of government and laws any man, or set of men, could feel justified in openly violating the prohibitory behests of those laws, and in setting the principles of social order at defiance. Surely it is only in the firm and steady maintenance of law that any man's life is safe, or any man's rights of property. It is mainly by the existence of laws, and of just and enlightened functionaries to administer them, that civilized men are distinguishable from barbarians and savages. A country that boasts of having laws, and yet is compelled to confess its inability to enforce them, is not at all entitled to the respect of the refined and cultivated portion of our race; and a government which is not both able and willing to see right maintained and justice firmly administered, in opposition to all the efforts of violent and iniquitous persons any-

where to perpetuate individual wrong or obstruct the peaceful progress of society, deserves all the reproaches which are reported to have burst from the lips of the Scythian philosopher, Anacharsis, in his memorable conversation with the great law-giver, Solon, touching the value of the legal code which he had just prepared for the people of Athens, when he said: "Your laws are strong enough to entangle feeble and innocuous flies, but the hornets and wasps of your community will break through them at pleasure."

I am happy to have it in my power to declare that the anti-dueling law of Virginia, already referred to, and others passed elsewhere in its likeness, had a very reformatory influence wherever they were duly enforced. But in a few years after its enactment the war of three years with Great Britain re-engendered elements of lawlessness, which exhibited their potency for mischief in various forms; and the dignity unfortunately imparted to this unseemly and unchristian practice by various men of note in different parts of the Republic began soon to be felt by society in a very grievous manner. I well remember how much of public attention, not unmingled with admiration also, was called forth by certain duels fought between the years 1815 and 1840. I will here specify a few of them only—those between Mason and McCarty, Decatur and Barron, Coffee and Jesse Benton, Houston and White, Clay and Randolph, McDuffee and Cummins, Benton and Lucas, Pettus and Biddle, Wise and Coke, &c. The scenes alluded to, described in all the newspapers of the time, had called into existence a code of social morals most deplorable indeed, and influences which no young man of unestablished reputation for personal courage could be expected to resist without much difficulty. From the time of my own settlement in Tuscumbia, Alabama, in the autumn of 1825, for at least twenty-five years thereafter, I really do not remember to have heard any one in the section of country

where I resided call in question the propriety of dueling, and so imperious and exacting had public sentiment become in relation to this matter that no individual, not in close connection with some Christian denomination, could have refused a summons to the field of honor without being consigned to permanent discredit and coldly shut out from all intercourse with gentlemen. To show hwo ridiculously far this evil state of things had gone, I will here mention a fact which will, perhaps, a little startle some who have never heard of it before. A year or two previous to the breaking out of the Mexican war (the precise date not now recollected) a large public meeting was held in the city of Vicksburg, Miss., in which the celebrated Jefferson Davis and his elder brother, Joseph, took a very active and prominent part; at which meeting resolutions were deliberately adopted upholding the practice of dueling, and recommending this unpeaceful mode of settling disputes among men of honor in most emphatic language. About this period duels were multiplying along the bank of the Mississippi, and especially in the vicinage where these resolutions were adopted, with most fearful rapidity; one of the political newspapers there lost, I think, as many as three editors at the pistol's mouth, and there were numerous victims of a like kind in that neighborhood—victims of a species of madness positively worse than that which is known to prey upon the canine genus.

It might well occasion astonishment that men should be found anywhere who would thus openly and arrogantly attempt to incite the young and mercurial members of the community to this unblushing and audacious disregard of law and sound morality; but the fact which I have just stated is just as true as it is that the States-rights-secession-Democratic party of the State of Mississippi in the year 1853 adopted a legislative resolution submitting to a test vote among the people of that State,

at the then approaching general election, the propriety of taxing themselves to pay the accruing interest on the bonds of the Planters' Bank, the validity of which bonds no man has ever presumed to dispute; and that the political party, routed in the previous election, when Mr. Davis had himself been ingloriously defeated, was able, by this notable expedient, to secure its own return to power, through the procurement of popular sanction for so base and unpardonable a fraud. In point of fact, I resigned the office of Governor thereafter, expressly upon the ground that I could not participate, in the least degree, in that unprecedented act of perfidy. Some will doubtless be surprised to learn that Jefferson Davis did himself personally vote in the city of Natchez, in presence of witnesses, in that election, and in a very ostentatious manner, too, *against* the taxation proposed. I mention this case now, in this incidental way, in order to illustrate still more fully, if I can, the policy, in a community of laws, of always adhering to the requisitions of the law; and, in a community professing to be humane and civilized, of giving no public countenance on any occasion to that which implies moral obliquity or the spirit of lawlessness.

As to my own personal example in the matter of dueling I have only to say, in addition to what I have said already, that I had the misfortune twice to be challenged to the field of honor; in two other instances I was foolish enough to be the challenging party. On the first occasion, in 1828, I was shot in the left shoulder by one of the celebrated dueling pistols of General Jackson, borrowed by my antagonist from the venerable hero of the Hermitage; who, by the by, had certainly no hand in instigating this duel, and who lived and died my friend—bestowing upon me an important office almost in the last days of his ever-glorious administration. The last time I fought was in 1837, when, after five shots having been exchanged, the affair terminated without the least personal injury to my-

self, my adversary having been disabled by my fifth shot, which had entered his hip.

In the winter of 1832–'33 I had a personal dispute at the bar with the famous S. S. Prentiss, during the trial of a capital case of much importance. His language, though sufficiently retaliated by me at the time, induced me to send him a challenge, which I ought never to have thought of doing. He promptly accepted, proved a far better shot than myself, and wounded me very painfully in the left shoulder. We adjusted our dispute before we left the ground. An indiscreet friend or two of his spoke disparagingly of my conduct on the occasion. I was highly exasperated, and wrote him a note demanding whether he had given his sanction to this act of injustice. He at once denied doing so. I published the correspondence. He placed such an interpretation upon my letter to him as gave him much offense. He proposed reopening the fight, which we did on exceedingly desperate terms. He shot me down, giving me a very dangerous wound. In three months we were good friends, and lived in the greatest amity and harmony up to the period of his death, which happened in 1849. Of this remarkable man, and of Alexander K. McClung, who waited on me to the field when I had my second duel with Mr. Prentiss, I shall have something special to say hereafter; for these were, upon the whole, among the most remarkable men I have every known. In native intellect I am satisfied that neither has had a superior in the Southwestern section of the Union. Both were brave, affectionate, magnanimous, and patriotic. I exceedingly doubt whether the State of Mississippi will ever have in her midst men of loftier bearing, and of greater intellectual powers than those friends of by-gone years to whom I have thus briefly alluded. I have no space here to speak of either of them as I feel them both to deserve at my hands, but shall take pride in doing so hereafter.

REMINISCENCE No. XX.

S. S. PRENTISS—RETURN J. MEIGS—MR. DAVIS—MONTGOMERY WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS.

In the year 1868 I was traveling on the railroad which connects Nashville with Chattanooga, when I was introduced to a gentleman whom I had never seen before. Having for many years heard him spoken of as a jurist of profound learning, a ripe and accurate scholar, a public-spirited and patriotic man, and one renowned for all the virtues which adorn social and domestic life, I could not but regard it as an instance of personal good fortune thus to be allowed to form his acquaintance. Having much curiosity about this personage, I sought to draw him into familiar converse. I found him polite and affable; but he was evidently at the time in low spirits, and there was something in his tone and aspect that made the impression upon my mind that he had recently been the subject of some serious misfortune, the remembrance of which was then sorrowfully preying upon his sensibilities. He left the car in which we were riding at some way-side station, and when we were once more in motion, I learned on inquiry that this gentleman had a few days before lost an amiable and accomplished wife, whom he had loved with a devotion almost romantic, and that his many friends were beginning to fear that his former cheerfulness and animation would never more return to him.

The individual to whom I have been referring is now a resident of Washington city, and is the incumbent of an office, the duties of which all admit he is discharging with singular fidelity and credit. I will now mention his name; it

is Return J. Meigs, a man who is at this moment greatly respected and loved by all intelligent and patriotic citizens of Tennessee on either side of the Cumberland mountain. He was concerned for nearly thirty years in the management of as large a number of difficult and important causes in the Supreme Court of Tennessee, and before the subordinate judicial tribunals of the State, as any other individual that can be mentioned. He is the author of a voluminous digest of the judicial decisions of the State, which I have long thought by far the best arranged and most skillfully prepared book of the kind I have ever examined on either side of the Atlantic. He is one of the compilers of the "Code of Tennessee," which will favorably compare with any other municipal code I have yet seen. Tennessee is more indebted to this learned and accomplished person for that choice selection of books to be found in her valuable State library than to all other persons besides, whether living or dead. There are but few of the languages ever heretofore spoken among civilized men with which Mr. Meigs is not more or less acquainted.

In the Latin and Greek classics he has been asserted to be thoroughly versed by far more competent judges than I could justly claim to be considered. He has given as much attention to what is now known as comparative philology as any man I have yet met. There is no branch of human knowledge which is altogether *terra incognita* to his liberal and scrutinizing mind. He has ever manifested a deep and peculiar interest in the general spread of education, and in all things connected with reform and improvement in the system of teaching.

I often met Mr. Meigs in social intercourse in Nashville before he left that city, and now look back to the moments then spent in converse with him as among the most pleasant and instructive of my whole life. Our occasional encounters in the room of our State library (shall I confess it?)

on the long and otherwise almost unoccupied Sabbath days, I am sure I shall never cease to remember, both with gratification and thankfulness, so long as I shall continue to live.

Mr. Meigs practiced law for many years in Athens, East Tennessee, and afterward removed to Nashville, where he ran as brilliant, as useful, and as inoffensive a career as any man has ever done in any age or country. Here he remained until the terrible excitements which marked the first year of the late ever-to-be-lamented civil war induced him to dispose of his possessions in Nashville and remove elsewhere. It is, indeed, distressful to reflect that such a man as this should have been compelled, by such causes as I have alluded to, to leave the home to which he was so devotedly attached, and to break asunder so abruptly all the social ties of a whole lifetime; but so it was. Mr. Meigs was a firm and inflexible Union man. He mortally detested the secession dogma, and had but little respect either for the understandings or the hearts of its noisy and mischievous advocates. He sometimes expressed his views in regard to these matters in the frank and manly language which he had ever been accustomed to use among his friends and associates, and he occasionally warned some (who I know deeply to regret now not having heeded his sage monitions) of the dangers and sufferings to which they were about to expose themselves and their country.

But never for a moment did he descend to the use of coarse or scurrilous language; of which, indeed, he was wholly incapable. I have always been of opinion that nine-tenths of our Nashville population would have fought, if necessary, in defense of this excellent man's life or person; but there were doubtless at the time in that city, as is so apt to be the case in commercial places of this description, a few noisy zealots, hanging loosely on the skirts of society, and ambitious of acquiring a sort of vulgar notoriety, who

were ready to make themselves acceptable in certain quarters by doing such a personage as this some violence. I certainly never knew that he had reason to consider himself in danger until Mr. Meigs had ceased to be a citizen of Nashville. When he took his leave of Tennessee he left no equal behind him, either in scholarship or general attainment. The only man who indeed could be compared to him in the city of Nashville was the venerable Francis B. Fogg, who now, almost an octogenarian, is as genial and kindly as he could have been fifty years ago, and has at this time no rival in the place of his residence in deep legal research, scholarly accomplishments, and in that calm and philosophic dignity of aspect and demeanor—blended with a uniform graciousness of temper and a constantly overflowing benevolence, which have justly rendered him an object of universal esteem and veneration.

I have been of opinion for several weeks past that these Reminiscences would not be complete without some special notice of the honored individual of whom I have said so much on this occasion, but I did not know exactly how I should manage to introduce him to the notice of my readers. This difficulty was removed this morning by the unexpected reception of a note from Mr. Meigs, which I now take the liberty of publishing, and even without asking his consent thereto. To the letter was prefixed a printed slip, which, on examining it, I found to be a short extract from one of my own former reminiscences. I here insert the printed slip, with Mr. Meigs' communication, precisely in the form in which they have just reached my hands.

"It is gratifying to me to remember that I once voted for S. S. Prentiss when he was a candidate for Congress, against the regularly nominated ticket of my own party, just as now I should rejoice to recollect that I had co-operated in elevating to the Presidency of the Union two such noble-spirited and gifted American statesmen as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster; whose names, could they be inscribed on the Presi-

dential scroll in lieu of two others that I could specify, would transmit our loved Republic to the men of other ages invested with a grand and imperishable luster that all the vain and heartless triumphs of faction, devoted to the ingathering of the vulgar and perishable spoils of office, can never compensate."

This divine paragraph comes of the true inspiration of the historic muse, and, *me judice*, rarely has the Goddess done herself greater credit. Seldom, indeed, has she made an appeal so pathetic to the masses who wield the destinies of our great experiment. Not often has she stamped upon the shameless front of faction a brand more ineffaceable.

WASHINGTON, August 17, 1873. R. J. MEIGS.

Though I can not but feel that the above commendation is very far beyond my merits as a writer, yet am I not at all reluctant to publish it here, for sundry reasons, the principal one of which is that I am anxious to avail myself of Mr. Meigs' high literary authority as an effectual counteractive to what I have learned, without any special emotion, that several paltry partisan scribblers have been publishing of late in decrial both of myself and of my *currente calamo* effusions.

What my friend Mr. Meigs says, with something of stoical severity, concerning "the shameless front of faction," in connection with that which I have myself heretofore published in regard to the honored and lamented S. S. Prentiss, induces me to notice for a moment one or two other scenes in the career of that remarkable man which I have heretofore pretermitted.

Mr. Prentiss was by nature a poet. He wrote beautiful verses, which sometimes seemed to be impregnated with the loftiest inspiration. Several of his fugitive poetic productions, which I have often heard him recite to a choice bevy of friends, were exquisitely humorous. His recitations from Bryon, who was evidently his favorite among modern poets, were altogether the most impressive and electrifying I ever listened to. Both the "Siege of Corinth," and the "Isles of Greece," from the pages of "Don Juan," I heard him repeat more than once, and in

his golden convivial moments he would glowingly enunciate Byron's description of Alp, the Renegade—"Alp with the right arm bare"—dressed in character, that is to say, standing up in a fierce, soldierly attitude, denuded of his coat, and with his shirt-sleeve neatly tucked up above the elbow. I feel confident that Bryon himself would have been made more sensible of the grandeur and nameless beauties of his own noble poetry could he have listened to the soul-rousing recitals of one so strikingly like himself, both in genius and person, even to the natural lameness of his right foot.

The last of many political controversies which I had with Mr. Prentiss occurred in the summer of 1840, in the town of Gallatin, before a vast crowd of ladies and gentlemen. The conflict continued for eleven hours; the speeches being delivered alternatively. I shall not undertake to describe the extraordinary powers displayed by this highly-gifted orator on this occasion. I would willingly now travel a thousand miles to hear what I then heard, and would cheerfully once more consent to act as an humble foil to show off more conspicuously the surpassing brilliancy of this wonderful genius. Not a word of discourtesy was spoken during this memorable day and night by either of us; we slept amicably in the same room that night, in a little log tavern at Gallatin, and traveled in company next day, lunching on the road-side before we parted company for our respective homes.

It is extremely gratifying to me now to recollect that when I was elected to the United States Senate in 1846, Mr. Prentiss expressed himself as being highly rejoiced at the event. A month or two after I took my seat in that body he addressed me a friendly letter, in which he earnestly pressed upon my attention the claim of a worthy lady to remuneration at the hands of the Government, on account of a considerable sum of money loaned by her ancestor, a celebrated merchant of Amsterdam, in aid of

the American struggle for Independence. Mr. Prentiss had no pecuniary interest whatever involved in the case, but he had examined the facts connected therewith, and had become thoroughly satisfied that the demand set up was a just one. I took up the matter at his instance at once, and succeeded in getting the claim paid by the order of the Secretary of the Treasury. I hope it is needless to say that I received not a dollar for my trouble in that affair.

My attention chances this moment to be called by a friend to the fact, often, as I understand, published heretofore in various forms, that Mr. Prentiss, on the occasion of my last duel with him, audibly made some ludicrous remark about my "wild shooting," and recommended to certain boys who had climbed trees from which they could conveniently overlook the scene of combat, to descend therefrom if they did not wish that I should shoot them. I can only say that I never heard of this incident until fifteen or sixteen years after it is supposed to have occurred; and it would seem to be hardly in unison with Mr. Prentiss' high-bred refinement and courtesy; but regarding the joke as told rather too good a one to be spoiled by contradiction I have not heretofore given it any serious notice; just in the same way as I have not deemed it necessary in any formal manner to correct a mistake made by the worthy Mr. Lanman in his Congressional Dictionary, who has put me down as being just four years older than I really am.

I leave all such trifles as these for the discussion and entertainment of those who shall feel more interested in them than I could possibly do.

The pointed expression used in Mr. Meigs' elegant note, "shameless front of faction," brought to my view at once the language of a certain chief of faction the other day at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, of Virginia, where he again attempted, most unamiably, to revive the

excitements connected with the late unhappy war; charged Generals Lee and Joe Johnston with having been "cheated" by the Presidents and Generals of the United States into a deceitful peace; asserted that, had the subsequent conduct of the Federal Government been anticipated, nothing would have been more easy than for the Confederates to have won their independence in arms; praised the ladies of the South for not having yet submitted to reconstruction; absurdly menaced a renewal of the struggle of arms for the principles contended for for four years unsuccessfully; and did all in his power to rekindle the feelings of sectional unkindness which good citizens everywhere over the land were hoping would be soon extinguished forever. This is the spirit of faction with a vengeance, and will, I fear, bring more detriment upon the long-suffering South than fifty such men as Mr. Davis would be able to compensate in a century. I trust that the Union-loving men of the Republic will soon find that Mr. Davis speaks only for himself and under the promptings of his own restless ambition, and not for the high-souled and patriotic men of the South by whom he is now exceedingly well known. If I thought he could understand sound Latinity as well as my scholastic friend Mr. Meigs, I should be strongly tempted to give him a few lines from Horace's description of the disturbed condition of the Roman Republic when Sextus Pompey was about to make a piratical descent upon the coast of Italy, and say to him, in application to our own noble ship of State, now lying quietly anchored:

O navis, referent in mare te novi
Fluctus! O quid agis? Fortiter occupa
Portum. Nonne vides ut
Nudum remigio latus,
Et malus celeri saucius Africo,
Antemnæque gemant, ac sine funibus
Vix durare carinæ
Possint imperiosius
Æquor?

There is one other assertion of Mr. Davis which may demand a graver and somewhat more pointed response. He says that he has yet to meet with the first Southern lady who has been reconstructed—that is to say, who is reconciled to the Government. Now, if he means sweepingly to declare that all the Southern ladies still cherish the spirit of rebellion, he certainly does them most cruel injustice, and may, in certain cases which I could specify, bring upon them a misconstruction on the part of the Government officers in Washington, that might result in serious injury to claims now pending before them. If he does not mean this, but only intends to make known to the public that he has not happened to fall personally into the company of any Southern female not now breathing forth "war, pestilence, and famine" against the authorities at Washington and to those who submit quietly to their power, why I can see no earthly objection to admitting this to be true, since it may be that Mr. Davis has not been quite so select of late in his choice of political counselors of the gentler sex as he might have been. If he expects now to stir up rebellion again in the South by such pitiful and slavering commendation of Southern women as trickled so deceitfully from his lips three days ago at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, I can tell him that he never made a greater blunder in his life. Our women of the South are not yet all Amazons, and all the more refined and intelligent among them do ardently desire peace and the universal diffusion of kind feeling among all classes of our people, from the wave-resounding shore of the boisterous Atlantic to the sweet, quiet margin of the far-off Pacific.

REMINISCENCE No. XXI.

M'NUTT—JEFFERSON DAVIS—ANDREW JOHNSON.

At the special request of friends to whose judgments I owe much deference —friends who have been long familiar with some very curious and stirring events in my own early history which I have heretofore refrained from communicating to the public at large from the apprehension which I could not but feel that by doing so in detail I should possibly incur the charge of egotism, (so likely to be applied in all such cases)—I shall now proceed to give some account of a few matters not heretofore narrated.

A day or two after I reached the city of Natchez, in the winter of 1830–'31, I was introduced to an individual of whom I had then never previously heard. His name was Alexander G. McNutt. He was a native of Rockbridge county, Virginia, and was doubtless very creditably connected there. Mr. McNutt appeared to be at that time about thirty-two or three years old. He was a man of huge bulk; exhibited in a very striking manner all the ordinary indications of good living, and had become much renowned as a liberal consumer both of meats and of strong drink. He was a lawyer by profession, and had located in the city of Vicksburg some ten years before. He got but little employment in his profession for several years, but Mr. Huff, a wealthy merchant in Vicksburg, having then recently retired from business, and having a great deal of money owing to him by his numerous customers, threw, to the general surprise of the community, the whole mass of his outstanding claims into the hands of McNutt for collection; for whom he had in some way contracted a strong partiality. It is but justice to

Mr. McNutt to say that he was very diligent and successful in the task thus devolved on him, and, in a year or two after Mr. Huff's business was wound up by him, he got into a very large collecting practice, and obtained recognition as a man of considerable pecuniary means. He then formed a partnership with one Joel S. Cameron in the business of cotton-planting, and at the time of my meeting him at Natchez, as mentioned, this cotton-planting firm was reported to have made the largest crops in proportion to the number of hands employed ever known in Mississippi. Perhaps Cameron was, upon the whole, one of the most skillful planters that had ever undertaken the cultivation of the earth; and the plantation upon which he was located had been long celebrated as being peculiarly adapted to the growing of cotton. It was situated among the alluvial hills which surround Vicksburg on all sides except along the river bank, and inclosed within its limits a deep and beautiful lake, the vaporous effusion of which was supposed to be particularly propitious to the growth of vegetation of every description. This was the precise state of affairs when I first saw A. G. McNutt in the city of Natchez, a little more than forty years ago. Having determined to settle in Vicksburg, I went thither late in the month of January, 1831, leaving my new acquaintance, McNutt, behind me in Natchez, with other members of the Vicksburg bar, attending upon the Supreme Court of the State, then in session.

A few days after getting to Vicksburg a report reached that place that a personal difficulty, growing out of a heated conversation upon State politics, had arisen at one of the hotels in Natchez, between McNutt and a brother attorney, Mr. Joseph Smith, (with whom afterward I became well acquainted,) in the course of which the parties interchanged uncivil and insulting language, and even came to blows; that is to say, Smith slapped McNutt's jaws, who, unfortunately, at the moment, having lost his

presence of mind, made no attempt to retaliate in kind, or even to defend himself. This was a most deplorable state of affairs, it must be confessed, considering the condition of public sentiment in Mississippi in regard to such matters at that period. When McNutt got back to Vicksburg, which he did in a few days, he immediately sought an interview with me, and asked my advice as to the course he should pursue in order to the vindication of his wounded personal honor. He requested me to state frankly to him what it would be best for him to do. I inquired of him immediately whether he recognized what was called the code of honor. He said he did. "Then," said I, "the matter seems to me to be of very easy solution. If you had stricken Mr. Smith in turn, when you received the indignity at his hands of which you complain, I should say, without hesitation, that you were not bound to carry this matter any further; but as you did not, you are now bound, in order to retrieve your character, certainly at this moment under a cloud, either to attack him on the street-side with weapons, after having given him due warning, or to send him a challenge to meet you in the mode recognized among gentlemen. To the former I am utterly opposed, since a fight on the street-side might involve the lives of innocent persons, and this would be, moreover, in my judgment, an indecent violation of the rules of social decorum and propriety. I would advise you, therefore, to send Mr. Smith a challenge immediately, unless you have determined to submit disgracefully to the outrage of which you have been the recipient." He then told me that he must ask my aid in the preparation of a challenge, as he was wholly unaccustomed to the mode of procedure used in such cases. I drew up a short note for him, in the usual form, and, after having read the same in his hearing, handed it to him for signature. He took it and read it over, but in a second or two I saw from the discomposure which he

evinced that he was much in the condition of the valiant Bob Acres, as described so inimitably by Sheridan. He read the challenge over several times, his agitation deepening every instant, and finally said to me: "I would prefer keeping this paper by me until to-morrow morning, with a view to a slight alteration in its phraseology; to-morrow I will bring it to your lodgings, and ask you to deliver it to my adversary." "Very well," said I; "the note should surely be such a one as you could yourself fully approve, and I will now withdraw, with a view to giving you an opportunity of well considering the business, and coming to such conclusion as may prove entirely satisfactory to yourself hereafter."

It is almost useless to say that the subject of the challenge was never again discussed between Mr. Nutt and myself; and in a few months all mention of the matter in social circles was discontinued.

In less than two years from this period the good citizens of Vicksburg and its vicinage were greatly shocked by a murder, which was ascertained to have occurred upon the plantation cultivated by Cameron and McNutt, the latter of whom resided in the city. Cameron was reputed to have been slain by his own negroes, four of whom were apprehended and brought to town for trial. I was appointed by the County Court of Warren county to conduct the examination, under the supervision of the members of that tribunal, before which alone at that time slaves were triable; and I did so. The negroes were ably and skillfully defended; but the proof against them was clear and conclusive, and all of them put under trial were convicted, and thereafter hung. It appeared on the investigation that this murder had been concerted some time before; that the negroes implicated had assaulted Cameron with clubs as he passed early in the morning, on horseback, upon a narrow path, which ran along the verge of a thicket of brushwood, where the murderers lay con-

cealed, and when he was proceeding from his own house to the field where his hands were at work. After he had been killed by repeated blows, the murderers attached large iron weights to the exanimate body, and sank it in the waters of the lake, which was not far distant. The horse of Cameron returning to his house riderless, some suspicion was at once aroused in regard to the fate of Cameron himself; but his death was not certainly found out to have occurred until a violent thunder-storm had so agitated the waters in which the body had been submerged that it rose to the surface, where it was discovered and brought to land.

There was one of the murderers who was a very remarkable man. His name was Daniel. He was considerably above the ordinary stature, well shaped, and of a very commanding aspect and bearing. His conduct while on trial was singularly calm and decorous, and he was evidently without hope of acquittal from the very beginning of the investigation. A fact came to light in the course of the trial which attracted some attention at the time, and called forth also some comment. Daniel had been for many years a great favorite with his master, and it was said that the bosom of this negro was the dark repository of some secrets which Cameron had much interest in keeping concealed from the world. It was stated, and generally believed too, that Cameron had at different times put to death seven or eight of his own slaves, whose bodies were suspected to have been interred in places of sepulture only known to Daniel and himself. Cameron had fallen out with his comrade in iniquity, who had been for many years his foreman—for some reason not fully developed in testimony; and with a view to gratifying the feelings of revenge which he cherished toward Daniel, he had retracted a singular indulgence which he had previously and for many years extended to him. This indulgence had relation to the two wives whom he had been allowed

to marry and hold under marital authority after the fashion of Mormonism. Cameron had, a few weeks before, abstracted from him one of these wives, and, as was said, the particular one to whom Daniel was most attached, and had solemnly declared to him that in future he should be a practical monogamist. This treatment, it was shown, had been the main cause of Daniel's hostility to his once much-beloved lord and master. The murderers all died without murmur or complaint, except Daniel. He, after being carried back to jail, uttered many things, whether true or false, of a nature to give great umbrage to Mr. McNutt, and threatened, a day or two before his execution occurred, to develop on the scaffold, ere the fatal rope should do its office, circumstances calculated to throw the whole community into commotion. Mr. McNutt, being advised of these menaces, proceeded to the jail window, and made known to the prisoner that if he continued to repeat the language which had previously issued from his lips he would cause all his teeth to be drawn by a dentist. This silenced him for a time; but when he came upon the scaffold he attempted to address the assembled crowd in vindication of himself. This he was not permitted to do; but when he began to speak, in accordance, as was well understood, with the directions of McNutt, the drum was most vociferously beaten, so as to drown the voice of the dying man, and he was thus confusedly hurried into eternity.

The community could have little or no regret that Cameron had ceased to live. He had been long recognized as a monster of cruelty, and had little social intercourse except with his own father-in-law—a blacksmith in the neighborhood by the name of Lewis—who had been himself twice tried for murder, within my own knowledge, and had barely escaped capital punishment. The last of the murders with which he had been charged was one inflicted upon a negro fellow, whom he had

actually held upon the burning coals until the fire found its way to his vitals. I regret to say that in this part of the South, at the time referred to, juries were not at all accustomed to hang white men for murder done upon the sons and daughters of Africa.

McNutt was not yet satiated with blood. He instituted a prosecution in the Circuit Court of Warren county against a free man of color called Mercer Byrd, whom he charged in the indictment to have been accessory after the fact to Cameron's murder. It is certain that the watch of the murdered Cameron was found buried in Byrd's hen-house. The fact of its being deposited there was disclosed by one of those who had been executed, but he did not assert that the secreting of the watch in that place was at all known to Mercer Byrd. Mr. Prentiss, as I have heretofore incidentally mentioned, was employed to aid in the prosecution of Byrd, and for so doing he compelled McNutt to pay him $4,000 in cash, which was in truth but a reasonable fee. Notwithstanding Mr. Prentiss' high powers as an advocate Mercer Byrd was very near escaping. Two verdicts were obtained against him, which the Supreme Court of the State afterward reversed on full argument. On the third trial he was again convicted, and hung.

I have heretofore stated that I was one of Byrd's legal defenders. The day before he was executed I was sent for to the jail where he was confined, in order that he might advise with me in regard to an exceedingly delicate matter. I lived eight miles from the place of his imprisonment, and was at the time very far from being well. I went to see the unfortunate prisoner, notwithstanding. On entering the cell I found much to awaken both surprise and gratification. It was reported that the prisoner had a day before professed to have experienced a change of heart, and it was said that he was not only prepared for death, but anxious to quit a world where he

had seen so little of unalloyed comfort and happiness. I was too unwell to sit up, and had, therefore, to recline upon the prison-floor, over which I had spread my cloak, while I listened to a paper called his confession, which he had employed a gentleman of great respectability in the neighborhood to draw up for him. It was, indeed, a most astonishing document. He charged, upon the statements made to him by Daniel and his co-murderers, as well as upon certain pregnant facts known to him personally, that Cameron had been murdered at the instigation of McNutt himself, and he pointed in support of his accusation to the fact that McNutt was then in possession of Cameron's whole fortune (which he held in part as surviving partner) as well as of his wife, whom he had married in seven months after the death of Cameron—referring impressively to the circumstance that this same marriage had been celebrated amid extraordinary festivities, extending through two entire days and nights. This scene was indeed a very severe trial to me, but I endeavored to go through it with dignity and composure. So soon as the reading of the confession was brought to an end I rose up from my prostrate position, and addressed my wretched client substantially thus: "Mercer Byrd, is it true that you have made your peace with Heaven, and are ready now to meet the great Judge of the quick and the dead in the world of spirits?" He answered: "It is true that I have experienced the forgiveness of my sins, and I am prepared to meet my God face to face." I then said: "Mercer Byrd, do you know that you are to die to-morrow morning at 11 o'clock?" He answered: "Certainly; I have no hope of escaping the death to which I am sentenced." I then said in continuation: "Mercer Byrd, are you willing to put at hazard your eternal salvation upon the truth of the statements contained in the paper just read?" He responded, most solemnly and emphatically, "I am." Upon which I ad-

dressed him thus: "Mercer Byrd, I have served you long and faithfully; I have received not a dollar for my services; I expect nothing, and would have nothing, from you in the way of pecuniary recompense. I have now a single personal favor to ask of you: Let me suppress this confession; its publication can do no good, and may do much harm. Leave the world, I beseech you, in peace with all mankind—even with those whom you believe to have persecuted you." There was a serene smile upon the countenance of the dying man as he said: "Do as you please in the matter; I am content." I took my leave of him, and never saw him more.

Mercer Byrd was a tall, fine-looking mulatto man, of much intelligence, and of excellent character before being charged with this offense. I had known him well for six or seven years, and had also been acquainted with his family in North Alabama. I have heretofore stated that the late Judge Sharkey and the Hon. George Coalter assisted me in his defense. I will now add that both these gentlemen concurred with me in believing Byrd altogether innocent of the crime imputed to him.

A year or two passed away after this catastrophe without any knowledge of the allegations contained in Byrd's confession being obtained by the community generally, though the nature and extent of these allegations were known to about a dozen persons, some of whom are yet alive. Mr. McNutt, having become then a wealthy man, aspired to a seat in the Senate of Mississippi. The Democrats of the State were then struggling hard to defeat the celebrated George Poindexter in his effort to be re-elected to the United States Senate, where his acrimonious opposition to General Jackson's administration had given much offense to the adherents of this loved and honored political chief. McNutt was himself a Democrat, while a very large majority of the voters of Warren county were Whigs. The Whig candidate in that county for the State

Senate was irreconcilably opposed to Poindexter's re-election. So McNutt, when he became a candidate, pledged himself to vote for Poindexter's re-election if he himself should be elected to the position which he sought. The desired result was in this way easily enough achieved, and during the next winter McNutt was seated in the State Senate, where, taking a very extreme part against the banks of the State, to many of which he was himself a large debtor, he managed to procure a nomination for the office of Governor at the hands of some dozen of his legislative associates of the ultra anti-bank stamp, and took the field as a candidate accordingly. There were then many Democrats in Mississippi (including myself) who thought that the elevation of Mr. McNutt to the office of Governor of the State, notwithstanding the fact that he had recently displayed much more of a certain sort of ability than any one had previously suspected him of possessing, would be productive of much evil in various ways, and would especially give encouragement to a low and huckstering demagogism which was then beginning to display itself in a particularly menacing and disgusting form. So we urged that able, high-toned, and truly Roman-like personage, Major Benjamin W. Edwards, (nephew to the worthy personage of the same name who was the early protector and patriot of the celebrated William Wirt, and who so long represented in the Legislature of Maryland the adjoining county of Montgomery,) to take the field against him. Major Edwards reluctantly consented; so that there were now in the arena four candidates for the office of Governor, Mr. McNutt, Major Edwards, Colonel John A. Grimball, and Dr. Jacob B. Morgan, two Whigs and two Democrats. Major Edwards unfortunately died in the midst of the canvass, and I was called upon to deliver his funeral eulogy in the town of Clinton in the summer of 1837. McNutt was afterward elected by a mere plurality of popular votes.

In the midst of that gubernatorial canvass, in which I was really taking no very active part, McNutt went through the State making characteristic speeches everywhere, and succeeded in deluding many as to his true character and purposes. A few days before he reached the vicinage of the State capital, where I then resided, I learned with some surprise and regret that he had more than once mentioned my own name very disrespectfully and unkindly in several of his addresses to the people, and that he had charged me with being influenced by motives in opposing him of which he well knew me to be utterly incapable. I determined to put an end to this sort of assailment without delay; and with this view I proceeded to the town of Brandon, distant from Jackson only ten miles, where he was expected to speak, for the purpose of confronting him. So soon as we met at the hotel of the village, in presence of a large crowd, I demanded of him, in a calm and courteous manner, whether he had used the injurious language in relation to myself and my public conduct which had been reported to me. With much confusion and embarrassment, he confessed that he had. I then demanded that he should make a formal *retractt* of all that he had said of me of a disrespectful nature in hearing of those who were then assembling to hear him. This he refused to do. I then turned to him and said: "Sir, you know well that I have never been your enemy. For some years past there has been no familiarity between us. I have openly but respectfully opposed your election to the office of Governor, of which I well know you to be altogether unworthy. You have been guilty of traducing my character when I was not present to defend it. I have now demanded justice at your hands. This you refuse to afford. No one could know better than I do that you do not hold yourself responsible to the laws of honor. No recourse now is left me but one. I will not dishonor myself by applying to you language of personal denuncia-

tion, which, however merited by you, I could not use without some loss of self-respect. I now notify you, therefore, in presence of this multitude, that you have been engaged for the last two or three weeks in calumniating a man who has, without your knowing it, been heretofore your best benefactor." He looked very much surprised. I then gave an account of the confession made by Mercer Byrd; of my agency in preventing the publication of the charges contained in it, and said: "Now, sir, you plainly perceive that I have heretofore saved you from being placed before the public in an attitude which could not but have given you great and permanent annoyance. I do not even now say that I am satisfied of your guilt; for God knows that I have been struggling for years to avoid considering you so bad a man as the dying Byrd charged you with being; but I do now assert, what you too must feel to be true, that had I not interposed, five years ago, to prevent the publication of that same confession, you would never have been able to occupy a seat in the Legislature of the State, or have had the presumption now to present yourself as a candidate for the office of Governor. I feel now compelled to go a little further, and say to you that if you mention my name in your speech to-day I will expose you at once to public infamy; and that if you fail to revoke this day all the unjust aspersions which you have heretofore heaped upon me, at your meeting in the city of Jackson to-morrow I will be present, and then requite you in full for all your unprovoked attempts to injure me." He burst into tears and appealed to those present for sympathy, but received none. That day he spoke, and made no mention of my name. I went to the old capitol building in the city of Jackson, next day, to meet him in discussion, as I had threatened to do. He came to the back part of the building, and looked through the window to see who was present, and, finding that I had

been as good as my promise, he silently retired. Under these circumstances I brought this affair to a termination by publishing all the preceding facts in the newspaper called the *Mississippian*, in a file of which my long and very denunciatory address to the people of Mississippi may be yet seen, accompanied with comments such as I shall not now recite.

In the office of Governor it is but just to say that McNutt got along tolerably well, though he was but a poor representative of the virtue and refinement of the people over whose civic concerns he presided. A year or two after his course of gubernatorial services had drawn to an end he formally announced himself as a candidate for the position of United States Senator, and sent forth printed handbills making known the times and places where he would address his fellow-citizens in support of his claims to be chosen Senator, as the successor of Mr. John Henderson, whose official term was just about expiring. This announcement of Mr. McNutt as a Senatorial candidate gave a good deal of uneasiness to several gentlemen who were then already known to desire the Senatorial position, among whom were John A. Quitman, Albert G. Brown, Jacob Thompson, and William M. Gwin, all of whom were men of prominence and of great and ascertained popularity. The Senatorial candidacy of McNutt was productive of particular solicitude also in the minds of some by reason of the fact that he openly proclaimed his determination to confine himself in the political canvass which he was about to commence to discussing the question of repudiating what were known as the Union Bank bonds. This course on the part of Governor McNutt was the more surprising and disgraceful because of the fact that he had himself imparted dignity to these very bonds by subscribing them as Governor, and attaching to them the great seal of the State. I was

really at this time only "a looker-on in Vienne," and was quietly pursuing my profession, having no earthly desire for political promotion of any kind. But this quiet and agreeable life I was not permitted to enjoy, for one day, when proceeding to my own home in the city of Jackson, General Quitman came to me and said that he had just been consulting several gentlemen who were, as he was, adverse to the Senatorial aspirations of Governor McNutt, in regard to the means of defeating him, and that all of them had come to the conclusion that the only way of accomplishing this object was to get some suitable person to attend upon his proposed journeys through the State, and respond to all his speeches. He added, in a manner very flattering, that I had been unanimously selected as the champion who was to go forth to do battle against this modern Samson Agonistes. I did not agree with these gentlemen as to the propriety of my assuming the performance of this duty, and at first positively declined it, adding that my personal relations with McNutt were such as would make it particularly disagreeable to me to pursue him thorough the State in the manner proposed. "Besides," (as I said to General Quitman when he was urging this task upon me,) "recollect that I have already openly declared you to be my choice for United States Senator; is there not danger that if I go forth against McNutt, and succeed in securing his defeat, the members of the Legislature, when that body shall assemble next winter, grateful as they will naturally be to the performer of such a service, may conclude to take me up, whether I wish it or not, and send me to the Senate instead of sending yourself, as I hope that they will? I warn you beforehand, my excellent friend, of the impending danger; I shall certainly not seek the place myself, either directly or indirectly; every day of the canvass I shall admit my preference for you, and assign as good reasons as I can for

this preference: every day I shall defend yourself, Governor Brown, Dr. Gwin, and Mr. Thompson against McNutt's assaults; every day I shall carry the war into Africa, also with what force and skill I may possess; but I tell you again, very solemnly, that if you persist in forcing me into this painful and arduous struggle the probability is that I may myself be chosen Senator." As this enterprise was pressed upon my attention, day after day, and I may well say hour after hour, at length I concluded to undertake it. And here occurs to me a sentence or two from an interesting work that I have just read, which runs thus: "Every life as it unrolls has its turning-points, its critical moments. Among these turning-points there is often one that constitutes the crisis of being. School, college, business, friendship, love, accidents, deaths, may all prove such to us. None the less are our schemes, our chances, or our mistakes and disappointments. There comes also a great spiritual crisis to which ordinary life is related, either as the preparation or the result." So it seems to me now to have been with myself in this case. I followed Governor McNutt from county to county through the whole State of Mississippi, and met him before the people. Every day he assaulted, with the utmost fierceness, Quitman, Brown, Thompson, Gwin, and their prominent friends in the different parts of the State, denouncing the gentlemen named as "Sleepies," who did not dare to come out to meet him in open fight, but who expected quietly to clutch the Senatorial prize at the end of the conflict. He every day compared himself to some skillful snake-killer with his flail, striking about him on all sides in the thick grass, with a hope of killing the serpents that he knew to be nestling therein. Every day did I defend these gentlemen and their absent friends with what ability I possessed, and I had the better opportunity to do so in consequence of the fact that Mr.

McNutt constantly acknowledged me to be an excellent Democrat, with whom he wished to have no collision, while he charged those who came under his chastising scourge with being Whigs in disguise, or at least mere pseudo-Democrats. He spoke every day about three hours, and then retired precipitately from the rostrum and the place of meeting, and moved on to the next appointment. Every day, so soon as he closed his long-winded harangue, I spoke for about thirty minutes, and went on in pursuit of him. We never interchanged a syllable during the whole canvass. Sometimes we put up at the same hotel, and occasionally were even lodged in the same room. I suppose that we must have severally delivered at least one hundred speeches. Governor McNutt finally transformed his accustomed speech into a dream or vision, as he used to call it, which he took occasion to add to and embellish with new incidents from day to day, until it really became quite a ludicrous melange, and all at the expense of the "sleepy" candidates for the Senate. As he poured forth mainly the same utterances on each successive occasion of speaking, the colored boy, William, who drove my buggy, managed to get it by heart, and he repeated it with well-mimicked gestures and intonation to large crowds, whom he never failed to convulse with laughter.

At last the struggle closed. Then it became evident to all that McNutt could not possibly be elected. The people agreed with me that it was not proper to send him to the United States Senate, as a reward for murdering his own offspring—the Union Bank bonds. He had managed so deeply to incense all the other candidates and their friends by his continued abuse of them that they would have preferred to aid in the election of any man whatever in preference to this most persevering tormentor. I had attacked no one during the whole struggle save

McNutt himself. The result, therefore, was not at all to be wondered at. When the Legislative Democratic caucus met in the city of Jackson, in the succeeding January, McNutt got on the first ballot twenty votes; (this number was never increased on any succeeding ballot;) I received eighteen votes; Quitman, Thompson, and Brown each less than this number. Gwin had withdrawn before the balloting commenced. My number of votes was increased on every fresh ballot, until at last I received every Democratic vote in the Legislature save one. In a few days thereafter I was chosen Senator in due form, and removed to a field of action where I should rejoice to know that my labors were at all beneficial to my country and the cause of constitutional liberty.

This first attempt in Mississippi to obtain popular approval of the fearful dogma of repudiation was indeed signally unsuccessful. But it is due to the truth of history to confess that the experiment thus essayed by Mr. McNutt has been much more successful since when conducted by more subtle and persevering ministers of mischief, who in 1853 were able at last, under the counsel and direction of Mr. Jefferson Davis, to impress upon the once unstained escutcheon of a gallant and noble Commonwealth a blot of infamy that all the waters of ocean can not wash away, and which it is not in the power of all-consuming time itself completely to obliterate.

The wretched McNutt, always held to be unconquerable before this memorable struggle, found it difficult to bear up under a result which stood accompanied with circumstances so well calculated to gall his sensibilities and mortify his pride. Had any man been elected save him who had publicly divulged the contents of that confession of Mercer Byrd the discredit reflected upon him would not have been altogether so intolerable. He was exceedingly indisposed for a few days, afterward got a little bet-

ter, but was never the same confident and blustering demagogue he had previously been. He died about two years after, and the "ruling passion" being with him also "strong in death," he talked politics to the last, calling out, as I have been told, in his last moments, for his favorite newspaper, the *Mississipian*.

I have all the more readily consented to recite the particulars above set forth by reason of the fact that I have thought that in the career of this remarkable man the seeds of wholesome moral instruction might be discerned, and that the disappointments which marked the latter years of his life may have a salutary influence on those of the rising generation who shall choose to meditate upon them. There are certain names which I hope will remain forever imbedded in the recollection of our mercurial, but high-minded, Southern people, as warnings against the exceeding unprofitableness of demagogism, and the fearful dangers which wait upon its prevalence. It is really to be much desired, in my opinion, that the examples of Alexander G. McNutt, of Jefferson Davis, and of Andrew Johnson, with the self-destructive results of an unscrupulous and all-grasping ambition, should be handed down to the latest posterity.

REMINISCENCE No. XXII.

HON. ROBERT J. WALKER—GEORGE POINDEXTER AND JACKSON'S ADMINISTRATION—A WORTHY TRIBUTE TO W. W. CORCORAN.

I ought, perhaps, long since to have performed the task upon which I am now entering. To no one outside of his own family circle was the late Robert J. Walker better known than to the author of the present reminiscence. My first acquaintance with him was formed in the winter of 1830–'31. He was then the most prominent member of the bar in the city of Natchez, where he had been a resident for some four or five years. He was a native of Pennsylvania, had graduated, as I have heard him say, as a doctor of medicine anterior to his commencement of the study of law, and before he located in Mississippi he had given much attention to the civil as well as to the common law, and was said by those quite competent to judge of this matter to be exceedingly well versed in both these branches of the jurisprudential science. Mr. Walker found, when he became established in Natchez, his amiable and accomplished brother, Duncan Walker, in full practice, and he had an opportunity afforded him at once of appearing as an advocate in many cases of the greatest magnitude and difficulty, and in the argument of these soon became recognized as a lawyer of eminent learning and ability. In a year or two after the opening of his forensic career in Natchez three very distinguished members of the bar of that city died: Mr. Griffith, Thomas B. Reed, and Robert H. Adams. The two last became well known as members of the National Senate. Mr. Reed was a Kentuckian by birth, was a man of most commanding person, and was undoubtedly a man of much ability

and learning, but he was not remarkable for brilliancy as a speaker or for scholastic attainments. Robert H. Adams was born in the county of Rockbridge and State of Virginia; he was a cooper by trade, and had worked at this occupation for several years before commencing the study of the law. He located, in the days of his early manhood, in the city of Knoxville, Tenn., where he very soon rose to distinction. He afterward removed to the city of Nashville, but did not remain there long before he determined to migrate to Natchez, where, in five or six years, he became recognized as a well-informed and industrious barrister, and a bold, earnest, and energetic speaker. Mr. Adams and Mr. Walker were very intimate friends, and a year or two before the decease of the former these two gentlemen had entered into an agreement to practice law in partnership in the city of New Orleans, which they were prevented from doing alone by Mr. Adams' sudden and unexpected election to the United States Senate about twelve months before his demise.

Previous to Mr. Walker's emigration from his native State he had gained some prominence as a politician, and he claimed, no doubt rightfully, the credit of having made the first speech in support of General Jackson for the Presidency, some time during the year 1824.

When the dogma of nullification was suddenly broached by the politicians of South Carolina in 1832, Mr. Walker came forth at once, in the public newspapers and elsewhere, as the stern and uncompromising supporter of General Jackson's famous Union proclamation, and I remember him then to have sent forth one of the ablest and most eloquent addresses in support of the cause which he had espoused that I have ever had an opportunity of reading. When, afterward, the supporters of General Jackson's administration in the State of Mississippi made up their minds to do all that might lie in their power to defeat the

re-election to the National Senate of the celebrated George Poindexter, an opportunity was presented to Mr. Walker of heading this important movement which he did with singular address and effectiveness. There are some curious particulars connected with this period of the history of Mississippi which many still surviving in that State, no doubt, yet bear in vivid recollection. The enemies of the Jackson administration tendered to Mr. Poindexter a series of public banquets, at which he was expected to address those who might attend in vindication of his own course and in fierce assailment, both of General Jackson and the measures of Government which he had at that time recommended. One of these banquets was to be spread in the village of Raymond, then and now the seat of justice of the county of Hinds. Some of my political friends had demanded of me that I should attend at Raymond on the day fixed for the entertainment mentioned, and that I should at the close of Mr. Poindexter's address proceed to respond thereto, at the court-house, which was not far distant from the stand erected for the occupancy of this personage. This I had consented to do, when suddenly I received a letter from my friend, Mr. Walker, calling my attention to a very spiteful and unjustifiable attack made by Mr. Poindexter in the National Senate upon his personal and political character, and urging me at the same time to allow him to take my place on the occasion just referred to as the answerer of Mr. Poindexter's anticipated speech. To this application I promptly acceded, and invited Mr. Walker to come up from Natchez immediately for the purpose of performing this duty of patriotism, and of aiding the friends of the Administration in the fierce and difficult political struggle which was then before us.

When the day of conflict came, the Democrats of the county attended in great numbers. Mr. Poindexter made

his expected speech, which was evidently very coldly received by most of those present; after which I ascended a table not far distant from the stand from which he had held forth, and announced that Robert J. Walker, of Natchez, who was then present, would immediately reply to the address just made, at the court-house, and invited all in attendance to accompany me thither, which most of them did. Mr. Walker, on being introduced to the crowd assembled, rose and delivered one of the most powerful political speeches I ever listened to, and I immediately afterward offered a resolution inviting him to become a Senatorial candidate in opposition to Mr. Poindexter, which he consented to do. This speech of Mr. Walker was promptly published in every part of the State, and produced a most marked effect everywhere. In a week or two this gentleman commenced a regular canvass of the State, and spoke to large audiences in almost every county of Mississippi, receiving nearly everywhere the most decided tokens of popular approval. Almost every day he was assailed by some anti-Jackson speaker, and on every such occasion I defended him with such ability as I possessed. The struggle was protracted, from various causes, for nearly two years, when at last Mr. Poindexter was defeated and Mr. Walker returned to the Senate in his place. His career in this illustrious body was one of great distinction, with the leading scenes of which the whole country is familiar. His Senatorial speeches, published at the time of their delivery in the *Congressional Globe*, were evincive of great ability and industry, and would have done credit, as I think, to almost any man that the country has produced. In legal learning, in general literary attainments, in scholastic erudition, and in a knowledge of all the more useful branches of science, there were but few of his cotemporaries who could have safely stood comparison with him. He was a warm-hearted,

truthful, and courageous gentleman, a tender and devoted husband, a dutiful and respectful son, and a most affectionate and pains-taking father. In friendship he was disinterested, faithful, and self-sacrificing. In all the duties of a high-toned and expanded patriotism no man has ever surpassed him. Many of the most pleasant days of my past life were spent in social intercourse with him, and it is exceedingly gratifying to me now to remember that I never had the least reason either to distrust his friendly regard for me or to question his perfect uprightness and honor.

Mr. Walker acquired a great and solid reputation as Secretary of the Treasury during Mr. Polk's administration, and his management of the financial concerns of the Republic during the interesting and trying period of the Mexican war added greatly to his fame as a statesman, and established in his favor a permanent claim to the admiration and gratitude of his countrymen.

Mr. Walker participated very conspicuously in all the measures leading to the recognition of Texas as an independent State, and to her subsequent admission into the Federal Union: and when the capital of the Mexican Republic was in possession of our invading army, under General Scott, he openly expressed the opinion that the wisest policy which could then be adopted by our own Government would be at once to issue a formal proclamation of conquest, applicable to the whole Mexican domain, to be speedily followed up by measures looking to the opening of that attractive region to our own enterprising countrymen, the establishment of post offices and post roads, the introduction of railways, and the organization of lines of telegraphic communication; by which means he insisted all Mexico would be in a few years completely Americanized, and placed for the first time in her history under the control of a sound and stable government, and

cease to be the theater of bloody and exhausting wars, and the dismal abiding-place of civil disorder and social anarchy. Mr. Walker's political sagacity and foresight were sometimes displayed in a truly wonderful manner, and, from my knowledge of his temper and general views, I have no hesitation in declaring the opinion that, were he now living he would still be, as he ever was, an ardent advocate for the extension, by all legitimate and lawful means, of our admirable civil institutions over all North America. Had his life been prolonged up to the present moment he would, I am certain, have been among the foremost in urging the early acquisition of Cuba, San Domingo, Jamaica, Porto Rico, and all the other islands belonging to the West India group and washed by the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. He would, I doubt not, have seen that the acquisition of these islands has been rendered doubly desirable in the last few years by the recent amendments of the Federal Constitution, since it is most apparent that under the fostering protection of these the colored inhabitants of that region would be given a sure guarantee for the perpetual enjoyment of liberty and a complete equality of civil rights, such as now so happily exists in our own Republic.

Those who are familiar with the intimate relations of various kinds subsisting for many years between Robert J. Walker and another worthy citizen of this vicinage will not feel any surprise at my here subjoining a very brief notice of one whom I have more or less known for the last fifty years, and for whose character, both public and private, I have cherished a constantly-increasing respect since the year 1847. I do not fear being charged with extravagance in any respectable quarter when I declare that I know of no man now living upon this continent more deserving to be loved and respected as a wise and munificent public benefactor, and as a humane and

judicious bestower of charity, in the broadest and most comprehensive meaning of that word, than our yet surviving neighbor and fellow-citizen, William Wilson Corcoran. A purer, kinder, or more public-spirited man I have never known; and if all the great capitalists that our country contains could but be persuaded to imitate his noble example our Republic would soon become a paradise, and the possession of wealth, so far from attracting envy, as it is so often known to do, and begetting enmity, would be thenceforth recognized, and justly, as only the enjoyment of the high and sacred privilege of doing good, of relieving the manifold distresses of human kind, and of extending the happiness of our fellow creatures wheresoever they may be found. This would confer more real honor than all the titles of nobility that the aristocrats of the world have been able to invent, and be the source of more true glory than even the winners of great battles have ever been able to achieve.

There is no danger that the generations of posterity will forget the numerous but unostentatious charities which the heart of Mr. Corcoran has prompted and his sound and discriminating intellect has put in operation. Numerous gifted pens, I am glad to know, have been already occupied in the specification of his benefactions, and in the delineation of his social and domestic virtues, and there are solid and enduring monuments in our midst, and in almost every corner of this District, which will preserve his fame as a philanthropist and as a munificent patron of the arts for a thousand generations to come. So long as the national capital shall continue to stand as a token of the power and glory of this unequaled Republic, or the lordly Potomac be seen to wash the foot of that beautiful hill which it occupies and adorns, will the warm-hearted men and women of the land be heard to breathe forth accents of praise and gratitude in honor of one to

whom, perhaps, with more justice might be applied than to any other man now treading the soil of this continent, the glowing and beautiful lines of the renowned moral poet of England, who thus sung, nearly two centuries ago, in praise of one of his own countrymen:

But all our praises why should lords engross?
Rise, honest muse! and sing "The Man of Ross!"
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns toss'd,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveler repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
"The Man of Ross" divides the weekly bread!
He feeds yon almshouse, neat, but void of state,
Where age and want sit smiling at the gate:
Him, portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blessed,
The young who labor, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? "The Man of Ross" relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes and gives.
Is there a variance? enter but this door,
Baulked are the courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now a useless race.

REMINISCENCE No. XXIII.

GOVERNOR BROWNLOW—MR. BENJAMIN.

In the same desultory or "*carptim*" manner, as Sallustius Crispus would call it, I proceed further to notice the men and things which have been heretofore present to my experience.

There is an individual living in Knoxville, Tenn., whom I have long and familiarly known. He and I have never belonged to the same political party, and there are, doubtless, many questions now more or less agitating the public mind upon which we are not precisely in harmony. But the mere ties of party I have never held to be of equal dignity with the obligations of moral duty, and there has never been, and I trust there never will be, a time when I shall take it for granted that all who agree with me in political sentiment are necessarily honest and patriotic, and those who do not thus agree with me are knaves and enemies to the cause of freedom. I have lived long enough to find out that there are good and bad men of all parties and of all sects of religion under the sun, and that there are not two greater foes to virtue and the general well-being of society than the prejudice engendered by extreme political partisanship and the unreasoning religious bigotry which damns without mercy all the members of all Christian sects whatever who chance to dissent either in regard to doctrinal principles or church ceremonials from the particular denomination with which they may have associated themselves. It is currently asserted among certain rather superficial persons that the existence of party dissensions in a republic like our own is a sort of necessary evil. I have never so thought.

though I am quite aware that a number of causes may be of power to produce some contrariety of views upon almost any question which could be mentioned. In such a high condition of social culture as it is at least easy to imagine, and in the absence of all those demoralizing influences which war of every kind is sure to call into being, I have ever believed that though absolute uniformity of sentiment is not to be confidently anticipated, yet that everything in the form of an over-close party organization, accompanied as it must ever be by the blind and barbarizing antagonisms of faction—selfishly and unscrupulously seeking the spoils of office, or to lay hold upon the exterior symbols of political power in order to the gratification of a low and huckstering ambition—might as easily be avoided as many other mischiefs which are known to vanish as society advances in refinement and intelligence. I am yet to witness or to hear of the first signal party triumph that was not in the sequel marked with gross abuses of power and with deeds of every description calculated to awaken feelings of horror and disgust in upright and elevated minds: and he has surely read the pages of history with little profit who is not aware that all great and widely beneficial reforms in government and laws have been brought about, not by the exclusive instrumentality of any one political faction, fervidly exultant over some recently-won party victory, but by the cool and steady co-operation of liberal-minded and enlightened patriots, who, without regard to existing party designations, have been able to rise up for the time above the delusory and fatal guidance of extreme party zealotry, and the trickish subtleties of a low-bred, vulgar, and mischief-spreading demagoguism. It was the sage and brotherly union of highly-endowed patriotic tories with persons of a similar moral stamp, previously recognized as belonging to the Whig ranks, to which Eng-

land is undeniably indebted for the civic revolution of 1688, the more recent repeal of the corn laws, for Catholic emancipation, and for all the invaluable ameliorations which have been effected in our own time in her criminal code and in her rules of judicial procedure. So in our own country, even our intelligent schoolboys know that similar results were brought about by almost precisely similar means in 1819, in 1831, in 1850, and in 1861, or rather between that noted year and the year 1865. How how much in error, then, must those be who seek to perpetuate enmities of a partisan cast for purposes altogether distinct from the real welfare of the Republic, or who struggle to keep in existence the mere hull of a political party after all the great ends of its original mission have been fully accomplished, and when even its distinctive corporate cognomen has become suggestive only of past transactions, of a comparatively recent date, deeply dishonoring to all directly concerned therein, and little less discreditable to those who have thoughtlessly yielded their momentary countenance and support to these proceedings while in process of enactment, and to their known projectors or instigators.

These general remarks, which may seem at first to some to be a little out of place here, will at least serve as an introduction to what I have to say in reference to the worthy citizen of my own State who has been already alluded to.

The Hon. William G. Brownlow is undoubtedly one of the most marked and peculiar characters of the present age. I speak of what I am sure I know perfectly when I assert that there is not a man to be found on the *terra firma* of America more honest, more truthful, or kinder hearted than the personage just mentioned. Little do they know of the graces which adorn his character, or of the generous qualities of his nature, who judge of him

alone by the terrible fulminations which sometimes are seen to flash from his gifted and all-excoriating pen. He is certainly the most potential castigator of impertinence or folly that the country now knows, and he who ventures to assail him had far better rouse the fury of the fretted porcupine. It is certain that all who are ambitious of having collision with him would act with commendable prudence, ere they do so, to put there own house in order; for nothing is more certain than if they have left a cranny open anywhere he will find it out and penetrate it, and leave such marks of his destructive access as neither time nor the circumstances of personal good fortune will have power to obliterate. Mr. Brownlow is no longer a speaker of speeches in the accustomed sense of that word; but what he writes of men and things is always read, and he may be well said to possess in an eminent degree that sort of eloquence which was attributed to one of old, who was said "to leave stings in the minds of his hearers." His mind is by nature vigorous, agile, and astute to a degree unsurpassed by any of his cotemporaries. He well understands the *genus homo*, both in the *abstract* and in the *concrete;* yet he is as far from everything approaching to misanthropy as any human being could possibly be. He possesses, and in a form perfectly ready for immediate use, the most particular and precise knowledge of the character and history of every man of the least note in this country that the last half century has brought to view. He is, in as high a degree as any man I have at any time known, an inflexible devotee to principle, though he is not weak enough to pride himself upon having been absolutely consistent in regard to mere trivialities, or of those of a non-essential character. He has unquestionably committed errors, and these, when he has found them out, he has been always both brave and honest enough to confess. He is certainly ever true to the monitions of his own con-

science, and he would therefore be indeed a harsh and illiberal critic who would not make prompt allowance for mistakes committed by such an individual. He was, some years ago, one of the boldest and most powerful champions and defenders that the slaveholding interest of the South has ever yet boasted, and so he continued to be as long as he regarded the attacks made upon that system as instigated by a blind and unreasoning fanaticism, or as originating in demagoguical ambition, seeking local popularity and political advancement at the expense of the peace and happiness of the Republic. When he afterward found the slaveholding system of the South seized upon by the hare-brained fanatics of the sunny region in which he himself resided, for the purpose of bursting asunder the bonds of the Union and building up for the benefit of a few designing aspirants a separate and independent republic—soon to eventuate, if allowed to have its natural progress, in an irresponsible military despotism—he promptly armed himself for this new contest, and eventually consented to the sacrifice of the system which he had once so eloquently and heroically defended, upon the altar of his country's tranquillity and repose. In the early period of the recent struggle for the establishment of a Southern Confederacy he was made the victim of lawless violence under the special inspiration of the War Department at Richmond, in which the infamous Judah P. Benjamin then presided. He was ruthlessly torn from the society of his family, deprived of his liberty, and subjected to all sorts of indignities on account of his daring to give free and courteous expression to his opinions as a lover of the Union and as a veritable self-devoting patriot. Such was the cruel maltreatment which he received that his physical constitution was completely broken down, and his bodily health irretrievably ruined. It is one of the most gratifying reminiscences of my life

that, though myself inveigled at the time in the Confederate meshes, I openly and earnestly protested against this unjust and ruffianly harrassment of one whom I greatly loved and honored, despite our differences of opinion touching the matters then in progress. It is almost equally gratifying to me to know that when I was in a state of constrained exile upon a foreign shore Mr. Brownlow's most strenuous efforts in my behalf were made without my solicitation, and even without my knowledge. I am confident that no suffering Confederate in Tennessee ever asked Mr. Brownlow's kindly interposition in his own behalf with the Government at Washington who was refused it. I remember that in the very summer of my own return home, that is to say, in 1865, I drew up a petition, addressed to the President of the United States, praying the liberation of Jeff. Davis and Alexander Stephens from imprisonment. I got it subscribed by a number of citizens, and took it to Mr. Brownlow, then Governor of Tennessee, for his signature.

He received me very graciously; said the question was one of some delicacy and perplexity, and he would, with my consent, take my petition under consideration for a few days, in his own characteristic style saying: "I shall have to fast and pray over this application; yes, Governor, I shall have to fast and pray over it!" If he did not subscribe the paper at once, as I greatly wished him to do, no one could convince me that his motives for refusing to do so were otherwise than upright and patriotic.

Mr. Brownlow is no longer Governor of Tennessee. While he was in that high and responsible office no one ever ranked me among his political supporters; though I should be ashamed to remember now that I have ever for a moment distrusted his integrity or seriously called in question his capacity. I can now say with absolute sincerity what all Tennessee, I am sure, will one day acknowl-

edge, that the noble State which holds in her bosom the ashes of a Jackson, a Polk, and a Bell, has seldom, if ever, been blessed with an executive chief of greater ability than Mr. Brownlow, and certainly with not a single one more upright and well-intentioned than himself. I regret to have to say, in conclusion, that some startlingly corrupt and profligate transactions recently reported to me from the capital of Tennessee have constrained me painfully to regret that some such an incorruptible and indomitable man as the much reviled William G. Brownlow is not now at the governmental helm of that unfortunate but time-honored Commonwealth, where organized robbery, under the once venerated name of Democracy, has been notoriously allowed to seat itself among the money bags of the State treasury, in order to satiate, at leisure, its rapacious maw with that which has been extracted from the blood and sweat of an industrious, high-minded, but too confiding people.

Some of mine ancient friends in Tennessee will now understand that of which I warned them two years ago, when certain plausible, fair-spoken gentlemen about their State Capitol were opposing so fiercely and uncivilly the creation of a third party in Tennessee—to be composed of the best materials of the two old ones—and perceive what objects these ingenious gentlemen then had in view, and will, I hope, guard against any similar attempt to deceive them from the same quarter. Surely after this astounding development few citizens of Tennessee will continue to doubt the imperious necessity there existing that old and worn-out party names should be forever given up; that the rotten and tottering organization still called Democratic, but which really has not now one particle of healthful and useful vitality, and which has been, by deceitful specifics of various kinds, retained upon the arena for the exclusive benefit of a few heartless and uncultured

demagogues, should be at once allowed to sink into the grave which has been for full ten years yawning to receive it; after which all the real friends of order and progress may become, there as elsewhere, cordially united in an effort to cicatrize all the wounds of the past, and to renew those scenes of sweet tranquillity and brotherhood in which our honored fathers, in the olden time, once so rejoicingly participated.

REMINISCENCE No. XXIV.

THE CONFEDERATE CABINET—JUDAH P. BENJAMIN'S CAREER—THE HAMPTON ROADS CONFERENCE AND THE MEETING AT THE AFRICAN CHURCH.

I have thought it best to reserve certain particulars specified in the present number for this perhaps last of the reminiscences of the past which I shall now write. The facts which will be narrated in the paragraphs which follow have to some extent been alluded to before, but not fully set forth.

I was not a little amused the other day at learning from the lips of a very distinguished citizen of Maryland that ex-Senator Wigfall, now, as I learn, a resident of the neighboring city of Baltimore, is much in the habit of saying that there are no two men living who could have brought about the defeat of the Confederate cause save Jeff. Davis and Judah P. Benjamin. Mr. Wigfall is undoubtedly himself a man of an active and vigorous intellect, and of a singularly enterprising spirit, and it is but due to him to say that, while occupying a seat in the Confederate Senate, he manifested on many occasions a sterling independence of character, and yielded a consistent support of his own avowed principles, calculated to secure to him the esteem and confidence of many who were themselves very far from concurring in all his extreme political opinions. That he placed a proper estimate upon Mr. Davis and Mr. Benjamin I shall readily acknowledge: but I must be permitted to doubt whether any abilities or virtues in the leaders of the Confederate movement would have been sufficient to secure the object sought to be at-

tained, and I am very confident, for reasons already given by me, that the most complete success of the rebellion would have been signally ruinous and dishonoring to the Southern States and people. I have no inclination to descant further now upon this painful topic. The day is very far distant, I am sure, when any such injudicious experiment as the attempt to establish a separate Southern republic will be again essayed; and the sad experience of the past will be very likely to prevent those who have suffered so grievously from the shortcomings and gross derelictions of Messrs. Davis, Benjamin, and their close ally, Mr Hunter, of Virginia, from intrusting to three individuals of precisely such attributes and qualifications as they have heretofore exhibited the lead in any movement whatever of great national importance.

After all that has been heretofore published by me no one, I am sure, will be at all surprised that almost as soon as I reached Richmond, in the winter of 1862-'3, I felt called upon to initiate a struggle for the reformation of Mr. Davis' strangely-constituted Cabinet. Every honorable effort of which I was capable was made for the official displacement of Mr. Benjamin, Mr. Mallory, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Memminger, and Mr. Northrop, the Confederate Commissary General. After a warm and long-continued struggle Mr. Mallory was able to secure impunity at the hands of Congress for his many malfeasances and almost innumerable blunders. Mr. Benjamin's renomination by Mr. Davis for the Department of War was defeated in the Confederate Senate, but this, as it chanced to turn out, was only equivalent to "kicking him up stairs," as is known to have been the case in a certain noted instance in English history; for on Mr. Davis' nomination of him afterward for Secretary of State the Confederate Senate was persuaded to confirm him—mainly, as one may reasonably conjecture, because of its being known that Mr.

Davis needed constantly the aid of a facile and polished writer in the preparation of his messages and other important official documents. After an earnest and long-continued effort I procured at last such a declaration from the House of Representatives of want of confidence in Mr. Memminger as compelled his special friends in that body to engage for him that if I would not press my resolution to a final vote he would resign immediately after the close of the session of Congress then in progress. Mr. Seddon, against whom I originated proceedings equally hostile, was able to prolong his official life for some months by reason alone of the shameful inaction of the special committee to whom my resolution of inquiry in his case had been referred to report the deeply dishonoring facts which had been fully established against him. But his official head at last underwent the process of amputation with something like universal consent. Mr. Northrop, being a special favorite of Mr. Davis, was able to hang on yet a little longer before Congress at last united in demanding his removal. Benjamin remained in the Department of State practicing every sort of enormity up to the moment of Mr. Davis' noted *hegira* from Richmond, and then these two great State culprits fled together, leaving orders behind them for the immediate burning of Richmond.

Before this occurrence, though, as has been already heretofore mentioned, the two houses of the Confederate Congress, having at last become thoroughly satisfied of Mr. Davis' utter incompetency, had demanded in form that he should at once surrender all control of the armies of the Confederacy into the hands of that upright and able commander General Robert E. Lee, to which official degradation Mr. Davis, though manifesting at the same time the greatest reluctance, was absolutely compelled to submit.

About ten or twelve days before this last transaction I

left Richmond; not, though, before making every possible effort to get Congress to adopt a resolution advising Mr. Davis to make peace with the Government at Washington upon the very just and liberal terms which it was well known to us that President Lincoln was then willing to accord.

I will pause in the recital which has been commenced for a moment or two only, in order to put on record here in a more particular manner certain matters in reference to which posterity will be likely to feel a little curious. Mr. Benjamin has been already more or less referred to in terms of merited reprobation; but there are well-known facts in this man's history which should have always precluded him from official employment, even of the lowest grade. He undeniably disgraced himself in a notorious case of *meum* and *tuum*, *causa peculatûs*, before he left college. His whole career in Louisiana had been hideously marked with dishonesty and corruption. His known participancy in the famous *Houmas* fraud, while a member of the United States Senate, by which Mr. Slidell and other associates in wickedness by a shameful act of legislative legerdemain on the last night of a session of Congress, got passed through both houses of the National Legislature an amendment to a bill there pending, (the effect of which, had it not been afterward set aside by the action of Congress during the early days of its next session, would have been to deprive several hundred citizens of Louisiana of their cherished homes,) was fully exposed at the time in the columns of the *National Intelligencer* by that intelligent and upright gentleman, the Hon. Henry Johnson, and therefore needs no further explanation here. This man Benjamin was notoriously occupied almost every night during his stay in Richmond in betting at faro, and on several occasions while thus disreputably engaged is reported to have owed his escape from the vigi-

lance of the officers of the law alone to his prompt dexterity in leaping from the back-doors of the gambling-hells, where he was thus seeking the recreation of his faculties. These, with many other particulars of a similar stamp, were openly depictured by me in the legislative body of which I was a member; in proof of which I shall venture to insert an extract here from "Pollard's First Year of the War," which, though it may be justly thought to commend me far beyond my merits, will supply evidence that what I am now saying about the official misconduct of the person to whom I have been alluding is not now for the first time uttered by me. These are the words of Mr. Pollard:

There was but little opposition in Congress to President Davis, but there was some which took the direction of his Cabinet, and this opposition was represented by Mr. Foote, of Tennessee—a man of acknowledged ability and many virtues of character, who had re-entered upon the political stage after a public life which, however much it lacked in the cheap merit of political consistency, had been adorned by displays of wonderful intellect and great political genius. Mr. Foote was not a man to be deterred from speaking the truth; his quickness to resentment and his chivalry, which, somewhat Quixotic, was founded in the most noble and delicate sense of honor, made those who would have bullied or silenced a weaker person stand in awe of him. A man of such temper was not likely to stint words in assailing an opponent, and his sharp declamation in Congress, his searching comments, and his great powers of sarcasm, used upon such men as Mallory, Benjamin, and Huger, were the only relief of the dullness of the Congress, and the only historical features of its debates.

I do not wish now to expatiate upon this nauseating theme: but, in order to present Mr. Benjamin in the fiendish character which he so consistently sustained during the whole course of the rebellion, I shall here insert part of a well-known order which emanated from him as Secretary of War on the 25th of November, 1861, addressed to Colonel W. B. Wood:

SIR: Your report of the 20th instant is received, and I now proceed

to give you the desired instruction in relation to the prisoners of war taken by you among the traitors of East Tennessee:

First. All such as can be identified in having been engaged in bridge-burning are to be tried summarily by *drum-head court-martial*, and if found guilty, executed on the spot by hanging. *It would be well to leave their bodies hanging in the vicinity of the burned bridges*, &c.

This infernal act of Mr. Benjamin needs no comment. He is a man of undoubted ability and learning. His voice is as dulcet and mellifluous as that of the nightingale. He wears almost perpetually upon his visage a smile as bland and insinuating as that which may be supposed to have sat upon the face of Judas Iscariot when he was betraying the Saviour of the world with a kiss. After perpetrating his heartless schemes of mischief he is represented by those familiar with his secret hours of relaxation to have been repeatedly heard to chuckle like Quilp in the "Old Curiosity Shop," as delineated by the graphic pen of Dickens, over similar achievements; and the description of his grotesque person is, by reason of the somewhat dwarfish yet bulky frame attributed to him, amusingly applicable to the late Secretary of State of the so-called Confederate States of America.

Now, as this man had the fortune to be such a special favorite of Messrs. Davis and Hunter as to have been selected by his cunning co-plotters in mischief to make the opening speech to the crowd assembled at the African Church in Richmond for the purpose of being edified touching the somber mysteries of the famed Hampton Roads negotiation, it has been thought not amiss to let the world know who and what he has heretofore been in this world of sorrow and care.

At this same meeting Mr. Hunter is reported to have presided. He did not, as we are told, himself address the assemblage. This would not at all have suited the purpose desired to be accomplished. Had he done so he would have been compelled by the natural curiosity of

those in attendance to answer sundry questions relating to what had actually occurred at Hampton Roads, which would have imposed upon him the necessity of revealing all that he knew, or of telling a downright falsehood. For neither of these was he quite prepared; he preferred the device so well known to trickish political demagogues under the name of *suppressio veri*. It was announced from the chair, as I learn, that no one would be expected to speak on this occasion but those whose names would be called in succession by the moderator of the meeting. Mr. Benjamin now came forward, and made the most guileful and plausible address which he was capable of providing, in which those present were told, in most honeyed and pathetic accents, that Mr. Davis was solicitous, above all living men, for peace, and that with a view to attaining this object he had dispatched three commissioners to meet Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, one of whom, he said, was Mr. Stephens, of Georgia, who, being known by Mr. Davis to entertain the opinion that a just and honorable peace was attainable, had been given a place on the commission, in order that a fair experiment on this subject should be made; but alas! alas! and again alas! Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward had been both found to be inflexibly bent upon the prosecution of the war, and had fiercely demanded of the Confederates States and people an unconditional submission. Whether he shed tears on this occasion over the cruel disappointment of Mr. Davis' ardently-cherished wishes for peace I am not precisely informed. After this siren song of Mr. Benjamin had been thus winningly sung, it was easy for Mr. Davis himself to come forward and declare that since they were now forced to choose between unconditional submission and a continued prosecution of the war, he was decidedly for the latter; and to get those whom he addressed, and who were kept in absolute ignorance of the real facts that had

just been taking place on the steamer in Hampton Roads, to adopt the bold and sanguinary resolutions which were now presented for their consideration.

During the three or four hours which were spent at the African Church not a word was spoken by any one touching Mr. Lincoln's amiable and conciliatory demeanor at Hampton Roads; not a word about the four hundred millions which had been virtually tendered the slaveholding people of the South as a recompense for the slaves they had lost; not a word was said about the magnanimous offer of amnesty to the whole people of the South; not a word in reference to the manly explanation given of Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of freedom to the colored population of the South, favorable, as was that explanation, to the slaveholding people of the South. Mr. Stephens, when he wrote his famous book on the war, deemed it necessary to state the facts just referred to at great length; why did not Mr. Hunter, as chairman of this Richmond meeting, do the same thing? Why did not Mr. Davis make, at that time, an exposition of the *whole truth* of the case to those who had flocked to the African Church in order to learn the exact condition of public affairs, and ascertain what chance yet existed of the early termination of this wasting and bloody conflict? Why were not Judge Campbell and Mr. Stephens invited to state in the hearing of those who had convened all that Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward had said and done at the Hampton Roads? Why was it not stated, as Mr. Stephens has done in his book, what a noble and magnanimous desire General Grant had exhibited for peace without any more shedding of fraternal blood, and of the disappointment and chagrin he had evidenced at hearing that the negotiations for peace had failed? Why were not all these important particulars frankly disclosed to the Confederate Congress? Why were not the citizens of the South, whether in the army

or at their own homes, allowed to know what a golden opportunity was now open to them of being restored once more to the ineffable blessings of peace and to the paternal protection of the noble Government upon which they had been in an evil hour persuaded to commence so causeless and unprovoked a war?

It will not do for these gigantic wrong-doers to plead now in their defense that Mr. Lincoln made to the Confederate commissioners no formal tender of peace. This, of course, it was impossible to do without impliedly recognizing the independence of the Southern States, which it was altogether out of Mr. Lincoln's power to grant had he been ever so much disposed to do so. I insist, as I have always insisted, and as all men of intelligence everywhere will be soon found to admit, that the artful, secretive, and perfidious conduct of Mr. Davis, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Benjamin, in concealing from the people of the generous and patriotic South the liberal and humane offers of President Lincoln at Hampton Roads, is one of the most unpardonable instances of public malefaction and treachery that has ever stained the history of nations. Nothing can now atone for it, and no excuses which can be offered will be of power to assuage the rising indignation of a cruelly mistreated people. Not a drop of blood was afterward shed in this terrible war for which Messrs. Davis, Hunter, and Benjamin are not clearly responsible. All the evils which the unhappy South has since experienced are attributable to these monstrous public criminals alone, and the day will come when the language which I am now using on this subject, harsh as it may seem to some over-fastidious ears, will be everywhere regarded as singularly marked with moderation and forbearance.

Knowing Mr. Davis and the clique of which he was the head so well, I plainly perceived when I left Richmond what course of deception and fraud they would be sure to

pursue when driven by public sentiment to make some ostensible effort for peace. I did not at all doubt that they would avow themselves to be for peace, could one be obtained on honorable terms; but to a peace on the basis of a restoration of the Union they were invincibly opposed. This would have robbed them of their ill-gotten power; this would have consigned them to political discredit; this would have defeated the scheme of founding a new empire on American soil, with Jefferson Davis as its brilliant Executive Chief Imperial. The longer continuance of the war could do Mr. Davis and Mr. Benjamin no harm, as those gentlemen well knew that, no matter how disastrous this conflict might prove to others, they at least would be safe from injury by reason of their having a large sum of money waiting for them in Liverpool, which they could seize upon and appropriate to their own use in case the Southern people should be whipped into submission. It was fully understood when they fled from Richmond that Mr. Benjamin should traverse the ocean as quickly as he could, in order to clutch this fund for future division between himself and his recognized lord and master. The journey to England by Mr. Benjamin, and by Mr. Davis also in due time, upon this grand fiscal expedition, many persons in Richmond know well that I openly prophesied at least six months before it occurred.

Entertaining such views as these, I set out from Richmond in the cold and freezing month of January, 1865, in the direction of Washington city, in order to see whether the Government authorities there would not be willing to grant peace to the South on such terms as I would not be ashamed to propose to my countrymen of that region and urge upon their acceptance. Had I succeeded in my mission I should have borne these terms back to Richmond, and have boldly made them known to the people there resident and to the Confederate Congress.

I designed to lay this grave matter before the people throughout the Confederate States, and to obtain, if I could, their prompt concurrence. A number of prominent and influential members of the Confederate Congress knew well what sort of a mission I was about to undertake, and encouraged me warmly toward its prosecution. Four worthy colleagues of mine in Congress from Tennessee were consulted, and evinced the deepest interest in the success of my experiment. I had no favor to ask of the Government at Washington in behalf of myself or my particular friends. I contemplated making no revelation of Confederate secrets. I was engaged in an effort for peace and the restoration of the Union alone.

A more harassing and disagreeable trip than that which I performed from Richmond to Lovettsville, near Harper's Ferry, it would be difficult to imagine. I traversed a portion of the intermediate country by railway and on horseback, and I walked many miles on foot through a deep snow, and in weather as cold as I have ever felt.

I found, on my arrival at Lovettsville, Brigadier General Deven, of the United States army, in command there, to whom I surrendered myself, and told him the object of my coming. He treated me with marked courtesy and kindness, and allowed me to open a correspondence with the authorities in Washington, which correspondence was published in full eight years since, and is, therefore, unnecessary to be here repeated at length.

It is sufficient to say that the pacific mission which I had assumed was a total failure, mainly, I have reason to believe, because President Lincoln and Mr. Seward had been persuaded to anticipate a successful issue of the Hampton Roads negotiations. The following short extracts from my letter to Mr. Seward from Lovettsville, will, perhaps, be read with more or less interest by some:

"I now have the honor to say for myself and for a large number of the

most weighty and influential statesmen that the South contains, and, as I have good reason to believe, in accordance also with the wishes of a very large majority of the sovereign people of the Southern States, whether in or out of the Confederate armies, that we, conservatives of the South, are ready and anxious to enter once more into fraternal union with our fellow-citizens of the North; that we are resolved, if an opportunity of doing so *honorably* shall be afforded us, to withdraw at once from all political connection with the government now located in the city of Richmond, and to place ourselves once more under the protection of the flag of our fathers.

"No one knows better than I do that no such pacification as that which I now propose can come from Mr. Davis. His official position and his devotion to his own selfish schemes of individual aggrandizement alike forbid it. But let President Lincoln issue a formal proclamation, addressed *to the people of the Confederate States*, offering them complete *amnesty* for the past, and a full restoration of the constitutional rights which they formerly enjoyed, and they will immediately hold conventions in all the said States, and vote themselves back into the Federal Union, call home their troops, and leave Mr. Davis to enjoy, in such manner as he may be able to do, the despotism which he has established, together with such *foreign protection* for himself and his ignoble projects as it may be in his power to secure.

* * * * * * * *

"In conclusion, I have to declare that if, as I have never heretofore believed, but as has been diligently inculcated by certain persons in the South, *subjugation*, instead of *paternal pacification*, is intended by those who now bear rule in Washington city, I shall have to ask that—provided always you do not desire to try me as a criminal offender, an ordeal not altogether unanticipated by me, and from which I shall assuredly not shrink—you will be kind enough to send me such a passport as will enable me to go to some foreign country without delay, being utterly unwilling to witness the unimaginable horrors of which the present year of this most unnatural and impolitic war can not but be productive."

It being concluded at Washington not to negotiate further with me unless I would reveal the names of my associates, I declined to do so, and was given written leave to go abroad, which I determined to do in the first ocean steamer which might set out for Liverpool.

During my further stay in New York Mr. Seward, for some reason not precisely known to me, directed that I

should be kept in prison, where I remained until the day of my departure for England, when I was escorted by a military officer to the steamship in which I was to embark, and took my leave of my native land with much sorrow and chagrin, intending to return, if I could, in two months, by which time I felt confident the war would have drawn to an end.

The voyage to Liverpool was performed in eleven days. I proceeded thence to London, to Paris, to Lyons, to Turin, Pavia, Bologna, Florence; and, of course, I called at all the intermediate points. From Florence I set out for Leghorn, where I took a steamer for Naples, and after visiting Pompeii and other places of note in that vicinage, I proceeded to Rome by land, thence to Civita Vecchia by railway, thence to Leghorn by stage-coach, from which latter place I set out for Marseilles by water. On arriving there I proceeded to Paris by railway, thence to London again, thence to Liverpool, and set sail from that city for New York, which I reached in less than seven weeks from the time that I had set sail from that place to Liverpool. Just as I entered the port of New York the news of General Lee's surrender was received, and I became anxious to go South, in order to aid in reconciling my countrymen there to the results of the war. But Mr. Seward not deeming this to be desirable I was again cast into prison for a week or two. President Lincoln, as I am assured, was about to order my release when the hand of the assassin consigned him to the tomb! After Mr. Johnson's accession to power, through the zealous instrumentality of several valued friends, I was allowed once more to breathe the fresh air of heaven, but held under obligation to report at the headquarters of General Dix from time to time, and not on any account to go south of New York; from which I conjecture that I must have been viewed by those then in power at Washington as a par-

ticularly combative and dangerous person. Under these circumstances I asked to be allowed to visit my children and grandchildren on the Pacific coast; in response to which application I was peremptorily ordered to leave the United States on pain of being again thrown into confinement. Without delay I proceeded to Montreal, in Canada, where, for several months, I was the recipient of the kindest hospitality at the hands of the intelligent and refined population of that city. I was so much pleased with Montreal that, despairing of being permitted within a reasonable period of time to return to my own home in Tennessee, I was proceeding to make arrangements for a permanent residence in Canada when an event occurred which unexpectedly procured me permission to return to Nashville. One morning, in front of the principal hotel in Montreal, some seven or eight persons, chiefly Confederate refugees, announced to me their intention to pull down the flag of the United States from the roof of the building occupied by the American Consulate. I remonstrated warmly against a movement so indecent and ruffianly, and told them that if they persisted in the execution of this disgraceful project I would, in connection with other citizens of the United States then in the neighborhood, whose aid I could easily obtain, defend the flag of our fathers at the hazard of my life; stating that the war was now over, and it behooved those of us who had been seduced into rebellion to return as promptly as possible to the pathway of patriotic duty. No more was heard of this insane scheme.

A few days after this, Major Potter, the high-toned and chivalrous Consul General of the United States, called on me at my boarding-house, expressed the high gratification which my conduct on the occasion just mentioned had given him, and told me that in consideration thereof he had himself demanded from the Washington authori-

ties permission for my return to the bosom of my family in Tennessee. In a day or two more I was journeying toward the loved South, on reaching which I commenced the most earnest efforts for the reconcilement of my unhappily-estranged countrymen to each other, which efforts have been unremittingly continued, as many thousands well know, up to the present moment.

There are three circumstances upon which I shall ever be disposed to congratulate myself; the first of these is that I had no hand whatever in bringing on the war of the rebellion; the second is, that I have never possessed the sympathy or confidence of the ultra-secession leaders of the South and their slavish satellites; and the third is, that I do not owe my restoration to the enjoyment of civic rights to Andrew Johnson, but to the generous and magnanimous action of the National Legislature; in grateful return for which I pledge myself never again to be persuaded to the assumption of a hostile attitude against the noblest Government that the world has yet seen, and to do all in my power, so long as my life shall be continued, to secure the return of universal peace, amity, and true brotherhood among all classes of our people and between the various sections of the Union, under the Constitution as it is, and the laws made in conformity thereto.

REMINISCENCE No. XXV.

LYNCH LAW—VIGILANCE COMMITTEES IN THE SOUTH—HANGING OF NEGROES AND WHITES—THRILLING AND STARTLING SCENES.

I shall soon be forced by the pressure of other affairs to supend these Reminiscences for the present. Perhaps I may never resume them again. They have been received by good men and true of all parties with indications of warm approval, as unexpected as they have been gratifying. I have uttered not a syllable, in any of them, in the interests of party or faction. I have lauded no one whom I did not sincerely believe to deserve commendation. I have stated objections to no one which I did not perfectly know that I could incontrovertibly sustain by evidence. It has been far from my expectation or desire to propitiate the hirelings of faction, or to call forth the praises of those whose minds know not how to give up errors once cherished, or to receive the pure teachings of truth, however bitter and unsavory. To have received the praises of all such as I have just mentioned would have deeply wounded my own sense of personal self-respect, and have filled my memory with the rankling thorns of remorse. Persons of extreme views and of unassuageable prejudices, whether resulting from ancient party collisions or from sectional jealousy, I have not been desirous of enrolling upon the list of my friends and approvers. With individuals of this sort I have already waged a war longer than the ancient Peloponnesian struggle, nor have I ever desired to be reconciled to any class of them at the expense of reason and justice, and my country's welfare. I have recoiled from the discussion of no question however delicate

the examination of which seemed to promise any considerable public advantage. I have spared no bad man from the lash of deserved reprehension, of whose crimes I felt I had adequate assurance. Nor have I failed to hold up the torch of ridicule for the exposition of the weaknesses or derelictions of such men as I judged to be possessed of fame and influence likely to stand in the way of my country's repose and happiness, and of the essential principles of progress needful to be welcomed and upheld upon the natal soil of Washington, of Franklin, and of Jackson. My earnest ambition has been, by all judicious and allowable means, to promote the sentiments of good-will, of friendship, and of true brotherhood among all classes of my fellow-citizens of whatever political antecedents, and of whatever complexion or lineage. The union of all who truly love their country, for the sake of the Union founded by Washington and his compeers, is a maxim which I am neither ashamed to own nor to put in practice. The affectionate and perpetual affiliation of all patriots and honest men against all narrow-minded and plotting factionists and all who love either gold or the perishable trappings of official splendor and dignity more than they do the priceless honor of this grand and noble Republic, its Constitution and laws, its high examples of public virtue, and all else that appertains to national honor and happiness, is another maxim which is to my mind and heart alike sacred and dear. The past of my own humble career, whatever it may have been, is beyond amelioration; for the period of my earthly being which lies before me in the future I have neither any over-anxious fears nor over-hopeful anticipations.

There is now one very important subject remaining in regard to which I desire to be heard as a Reminiscent of the past. It is one eminently momentous in its bearings and well worthy of the sober and dispassionate considera-

tion of all who employ the powers of thought for purposes of practical edification, and who are accustomed to treasure up the varied lessons of experience for the promotion of the real felicity of individual man and of all self-governing peoples.

All who have ever duly meditated the actual uses of civil government must have found out that no government can be advantageous to those who live under it, or worthy of the least respect anywhere, that is not both capable of enacting wise and wholesome laws and of enforcing them among all classes of those for the regulation of whose municipal conduct they may have been provided; and it may also be asserted with safety that the organization of all social communities must be defective in some of the essential principles of corporate vitality in which any class of the people is allowed to set the laws at defiance, to tyrannize politically over other classes, or to employ the needful machinery of government itself for the purpose of enriching the few at the expense of the many. Domestic tranquillity, that most desirable of all municipal blessings, can never be effectually secured where injustice and oppression of any kind are systematically tolerated and upheld; the oppressed and persecuted will, under the irresistible promptings of self-love and the desire of self-preservation, be naturally inclined to rise up against those who hold them in subjection; and if the number of the wronged be sufficiently large to make them at all formidable, a sense of insecurity will find its way into the bosoms of the ruling classes themselves, and render them continually subject to groundless and fanciful alarms and apprehensions lest some sudden movement of revolt should be attempted under the leadership of a William Tell or a Spartacus, which must result either in the downfall of tyranny itself, or in the bloody through transient avengement of long-continued wrong.

The history of Sparta, and the scenes of collision which

so often marked with blood the repeated risings of the Helotes against their masters, as well as the celebrated servile insurrection in Italy already alluded to, in which several well-organized Roman armies were overthrown by the gladiatorial bands and the numerous white slaves whom they seduced into armed affiliation with them—during which even the Roman capital itself was for a short time in the hands of the revolted forces, supply the fullest illustration of the truth of the several propositions above stated. Let no unjust and overbearing class anywhere, either in the British Isles, in France, in Spain, or Italy, or in our own country either, expect to secure its own permanent repose and happiness save by the meting out full justice to all reasonable human creatures who live within the limits of governmental control: for let it ever be borne in mind that even they who war

> With their own hopes and have been vanquished, bear
> Silence, but not submission; in his lair
> Fixed Passion holds his breath until the hour
> Which shall atone for years. None need despair:
> It came, it cometh, and will come—the power
> To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

It has been nearly a half century since the celebrated Southampton negro insurrection occurred in the State of Virginia, and many are yet living who remember well how greatly the whole public mind of the South was shocked by the bloody and revolting scenes with which that tragic affair was attended. Before the painful sensations awakened by it had well subsided the celebrated book of Stewart made its appearance, which in a very ingenious and plausible manner delineated a scheme for the wide-spread insurrection of the slaves of the South, which scheme he asserted had been matured in the enterprising brain of the celebrated John Murrell, of Tennessee, who, having associated with himself a number of men of his own stamp, scattered through the Mississippi valley, including the

noted Alonzo Phelps, and the whole body of Thompsonian doctors, was, upon a day agreed upon, to inaugurate a movement which would soon result in such scenes of bloodshed and devastation as no country either in ancient or in modern times has experienced. I knew Stewart well; he was one of the most sagacious and insinuating persons I ever met. He traveled extensively through Mississippi and several adjoining States, and sold many thousands of his fearfully exciting and inflammatory book. In some places he received high public honors; large popular assemblages were convened to do him honor, and presents of much value were showered upon him by those who lent credence to his alarming revelations. He was looked upon by many as a great public benefactor, and those who dared even to question the actual existence of the dangers which he depictured were suspected by their more excited fellow-citizens of a criminal insensibility to the supposed perils of the hour, or were denounced as traitors to the slaveholding interests of the South. Never was there an instance of more extravagant and even maddening excitement amid a refined, intelligent, and virtue-loving people than that which I had the pain to witness in the counties of Central Mississippi in the summer of 1835. Vigilance committees were organized in some ten or a dozen counties, where the negro population was most numerous, and where, of consequence, the slaveholding class was more sensitive to the cries of alarm which at this time literally rang through the whole community. These committees were, in general, composed of the most wealthy and intelligent planters to be found in the several counties, but these planters were, of course, by reason of the fact that they stood more exposed than others to the dangers asserted to exist, also a good deal more alarmed than those occupying a less obnoxious attitude. The impression prevailed that the insurrectionary movement was

to commence in the interior counties of Holmes, Yazoo, and Madison; that the slaves were all to rise in these counties simultaneously; that they were to murder their owners and their families at midnight, burn the towns and villages, and, after getting possession of sufficient supplies of ammunition, guns, and other instruments of violence, they were to sweep over the whole cotton-growing country, spreading carnage and desolation wherever they should come.

I well recollect that in the town of Clinton, in Hinds county, where I then resided, the panic awakened was so great that night after night the women and children of the place were assembled at a central position, where they remained till daylight, while all the male citizens moved in armed squads over the settlement, in order to meet the earliest approach of the incendiary forces, who were expected confidently to come to our midst from the direction of Madison county. After the first organization of the vigilance committee, which sat afterward every day, the excitement, as was natural, increased perceptibly every hour. Suspected persons, both white and black, were apprehended everywhere; some of whom were brought before the committee for examination, while others, whose guilt seemed to be fully established, were hung without ceremony along the roadsides or in front of their own dwellings by those who had apprehended them.

It was a very unfortunate circumstance that just at the moment that these fearful occurrences were taking place in the counties of the interior a kindred scene was displayed to view in the city of Vicksburg, in connection with the gamblers who at that time infested in great numbers this important commercial place. In consequence of the daring and revolting manner in which these abandoned wretches carried on their unholy work of cheatery and pillage, many of the better citizens of the place vol-

unteered their services one morning to aid the officers of the law in effecting their apprehension. The gamblers shut themselves up in a certain house, which they barricaded, as they thought, very securely, and boldly defied the regular functionaries of the law and those who were now co-operating with them. Under these circumstances the outside crowd resolved to force entrance into this extemporized fortress, and with a view to this end, broke down the door. The first person who got into the house was a Dr. Bodely, whom I knew well, and whom I remember to have been a most intelligent and high-spirited young gentleman, of great professional promise. He was shot dead on the spot by some one of the villainous crew whom he was aiding to bring to justice. His associates then advanced upon the gamblers, succeeded in capturing them, and speedily hung them all publicly upon the street-side, without waiting for the more tardy and more authorized action of the judicial tribunals.

The news of this affair flew quickly over the country in every direction, and added greatly to the excitement and confusion already prevailing.

The vigilance committees in Madison and the adjoining counties were yet in vigorous and persevering action. A number of the poor Thompsonian empirics were taken up and either hung or severely whipped, according to the seeming force of the evidence adduced against them severally. Madison county was still the main focus of excitement, and every day we heard in the peaceful village where I dwelt of some new case of supposed guilt which had been there developed, and some new application of punishment not known to the law of the land, but which was supposed to be justified by the terrible necessity then dominating over all things beside. One evening I received a brief written application from a young Kentuckian, then in custody in the town of Livingston, in Madison county,

beseeching me earnestly to come up and give him my aid as an advocate before the self-constituted tribunal by which he was to be tried next day. The poor fellow seems to have imagined that it was a real court that was about to examine into his case, and that a lawyer would be allowed to defend him before it. I did not at all concur in this notion, but not being able to refuse him my sympathy, I got on my horse next morning, and proceeded to the place where his fate was to be determined; which gave me a ride of about twenty miles. When I got to Livingston I saw a large multitude convened, composed almost altogether of excited white citizens, to most of whom I was personally well known. I dared not name my business to any one, for had I done so there was not much probability that I should have ever returned to my own home again. I tied my horse to a post on the street side, and went to the room in which the committee was sitting. The trial had already commenced. I looked into the face of the poor wretch who had sent for me, without deeming it prudent to make known to him who I was, and that I was now present at his solicitation. The examination was conducted in a very rapid and informal manner, and without the least regard to the established principles of the law of evidence. At length it was declared to be at an end. It appeared that this man had brought down a boat-load of corn from Kentucky about a month previous, had carried it up the Yazoo river for sale, and had sold it, together with his boat, when he became suddenly an object of suspicion, and was apprehended and brought to Livingston for trial. There was not a particle of evidence implicating him in the guilt alleged, except that of two or three ignorant negroes in the vicinage, who had been seen once or twice near his boat, and from whose reluctant lips certain disclosures had been coerced under the severest infliction of the lash. I

saw that the committee was about to convict the man, and I felt for him most deeply; but what could I do? One of the members of the committee, Colonel Harden B. Runnels, observing that I manifested some interest in the trial, and yet lingered in the room, told me that if I wished to do so I might catechise the prisoner. I consented to do so. A more honest and benign face than this man presented I have never beheld. I turned to him, and calling him by name, I said, "You are a *white* man; you say that you have a wife and children at home whom you love dearly; you say, also, that you are very poor, and that you came down here on a trading expedition, in order to get the means of saving that loved family from starvation; you declare, in addition, that you have written to some member of your family whenever you could, and have sent them nearly all the money you have been able to earn; now tell me, I beseech you, were you to witness a bloody conflict between the slaves of this country and the white people, on which side would you be?" His eyes brightened with excitement, his voice was marked with all the emphasis of deep and manly feeling, as he responded, "Certainly, sir, I should be on the side of my own color." I interrogated him no further. He was hung in less than twenty minutes! The newspapers in Kentucky afterward teemed with the affectionate letters addressed by him to his wife during his sojourn in Mississippi, on reading which nobody, even where I lived, at all doubted his innocence.

I mounted my horse and rode in the direction of my own home. When I got about a mile from Livingston, in the midst of the beautiful hills which lie proximate to that well-remembered village, I saw a large crowd assembled. A good-looking white man, whom I very well knew, was tied to a tree, and stripped to the waist, whilst he was receiving a terrible castigation with rods. He had

been tried by the committee and acquitted, but he was, unfortunately, a Thompsonian doctor, and on that ground it had been thought that he ought at least to be decently scourged.

I got to my own home next morning. When I rode into the town of Clinton I saw a large multitude assembled on one of the most popular streets, in front of a store in which a Mr. Archibald Kenney, now in Staunton, Virginia, had some years before sold merchandize. I dismounted and went to the spot. I soon learned that the vigilance committee of that vicinage, composed of some of the best citizens of the county, had been trying a mulatto man, whom I knew very well, upon a charge of being a participant in the scheme of alleged insurrection. A considerable quantity of powder and shot had been found in his possession, which circumstance had awakened some suspicions against him. The committee had tried him, and had sentenced him to be whipped only, and they would, indeed, have discharged him altogether, as I learned from themselves, had they not dreaded the indignant rage of the population of the town, then in a very excited condition. The committee had been unfortunate enough to sit with closed doors, which gave to the imagination of those not taking part in their proceedings a wide field for unfavorable conjecture. When the sentence was announced the outsiders determined to hang their longed-for victim at any rate; and at the time I reached the place where they were assembled the preparations for the execution of the boy were going forward. The boy had been in the ownership of a venerable gentleman of the neighborhood, Captain Bell, a Virginia friend of mine of great respectability and intelligence. He had been a great favorite with his master, who had left him free. The captain had been dead about a year, and this boy, who by-the-by was nearly white, and singularly po-

lite and civil in his manners, had been since his master's decease a faithful protector of his family, which consisted of his widow and a single female child. This widowed lady had reached the fearful scene some minutes before my own arrival, and had been allowed, in connection with a learned and pious minister of the Gospel, Dr. Comfort, to hold a last interview with this unfortunate boy. She came forth from this interview, attended by her pious and humane protector, and advancing within the portico where most of the multitude were located, she spoke, with a voice much agitated and almost stifled with emotion, while the tears were rapidly coursing down her venerable cheeks, as follows:

"GENTLEMEN, you all knew my husband during his life, and respected him. This poor boy was his favorite servant. I know his disposition and character well. I have just catechised him most searchingly. Had he been guilty as charged I should have been able to detect his guilt. I assure you that he is innocent. Oh! gentlemen, (she wildly exclaimed,) is there not one among you who will stand up here as the representative and champion of a poor, widowed, friendless female?" I immediately rose to my feet. I looked circumspectly upon the crowd for a moment. I saw standing just before me the grim-looking face of a man notorious for his violent and blood-thirsty character, whose name was Hardwick, and whom I soon after prosecuted for a diabolical murder, for which he would certainly have been hanged if the victim of his atrocity had been a white man. I saw a new rope in this ruffian's hands, the texture of which he was feeling with his accursed fingers, evidently for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was strong enough to do the dread office effectually for which he had purchased it. I was conscious of all the perils which surrounded my position,

and I therefore proceeded with extreme caution. I spoke thus: "Gentlemen, you have heard the touching appeal of this venerable lady. I have nothing to add to her decorous and impressive address, but I have a word to say to you of a prudential character in regard to yourselves and your own future responsibilities. The excitement now raging in this community may after awhile subside. Then it may be that some officious person shall wish to institute a prosecution for murder on account of the hanging of this boy. In my judgment it will be most safe that whatever is done in this affair shall be the act, as it were, of the whole community. I am not willing that a few generous-minded young men shall be made the scape-goats of this vicinage. Let us all join in whatever act may be resolved on. Now I will take the vote of the whole assemblage upon the question of hanging, if no one shall object to it." No objection being made, I said: "All in favor of hanging this unfortunate boy will signify the same by saying *aye*." Nine-tenths answered *aye*. I said: "Those opposed to hanging will answer *no*." About eight or ten persons said *no*.

I determined to make one more experiment before I gave up all hope of saving a human being from a fate so dreadful as that I saw impending. The day was intensely hot. The street on which we were located was very wide and intersected with deep gullies. I said: "Gentlemen, let us settle this question more satisfactorily: All in favor of hanging will range themselves on the opposite side of the street: those in favor of mercy will remain under the shade of this portico." Nearly all rushed across the street! I left the spot with feelings of sorrow and disgust which no words can express. The boy was swung into eternity in less than fifteen minutes from that moment.

On my way home to dinner I met that distressed widow. She was on horseback, and stopped for a moment to speak

to me. She said: "Mr. Foote, you know what has taken place to-day. You were, during the life of my venerated husband, his friend and his legal adviser. Tell me what I had best do. I wish to prosecute the murderers of my servant. Will you undertake to bring them to justice? I will reward you liberally."

"My dear madam," I said, "We are in the midst of most unhappy circumstances and of most appalling dangers. The community in which we live is in a frenzied condition. Were you to commence such a prosecution as you mention your own life would not be safe. Let me recommend to you earnestly to bow to the imperious necessity of the hour. "She looked at me for a moment with a mingled expression of sorrow and resentment upon her countenance, and then responded to me with a grave and touching solemnity of look I can never forget: "I will take your advice. Farewell!"

I remember to have at this moment consulted with my family whether we should not at once leave a region so replete with scenes of sorrow, and so full of danger to those who relied on the laws of the land for protection and security.

A few days after I was in the city of Jackson. The Supreme Court of the State was in session there, of which the Hon. William L. Sharkey, so well known in Washington, and so much beloved and respected everywhere, was Chief Justice. He came suddenly to my room at the hotel one day, about noon, and showed me a letter he had just received from Mr. Patrick L. Sharkey, his first cousin. I read it. I found therein set forth the following facts, which were of course very concisely stated. A day or two before Mr. Patrick L. Sharkey, who was a very wealthy planter, a man of high intelligence and known piety, and who was also a justice of the peace, had, in his official character, examined a case brought before him which in-

volved the charge of inciting the slaves to insurrection. Finding no evidence worthy of respect to be adduced against the accused, he discharged the prisoner. This conduct greatly infuriated those who apprehended him, who, being citizens of Madison county, were manifestly under the influence of that excitement then raging in that most intelligent and refined community. These persons returned home, brought with them a large party of individuals equally excited as themselves to Sharkey's residence in the night-time with the intention of hanging him. He was a man of great fearlessness and determination, and when this fierce and murdering band advanced to his house, threatening to put him to death if he did not at once surrender, he commenced firing upon his persecutors, killed one of them, wounded another, slew a horse or two of the party, and then, having been himself severely wounded, crawled out of his house amid the darkness of the night into his garden, where his pursuers were not able to find him. He afterward managed to get to Clinton, where he was then remaining, and proposed to throw himself under the protection of the committee there sitting, being certain that if dragged to Madison county in the existing temper of the popular mind there he should never get home again alive. He had now appealed to his cousin, the highest judicial officer in the State, for advice and sympathy. Judge Sharkey had determined to obey the summons he had received—for he was a man who never shrank from the performance of what he believed to be his duty—and he now asked of me to accompany him to Clinton and to aid, if I could, in rescuing his worthy cousin from jeopardy. I did as requested, and when we reached the town we went forthwith to the presence of his wounded and suffering relative, got into his carriage with him, and proceeded to the room where the committee of Hinds county were assembled. There,

in a few words, I explained the object of our coming, and urged that our fellow-citizen, Mr. Sharkey, had a right to claim an investigation at the hands of a committee of his own county instead of being sent to Madison county for trial. After this Judge Sharkey rose and made a modest, temperate, and exceedingly judicious speech, in which he recognized the supereminent authority of the committee, under the extraordinary circumstances existing, and expressed a confident hope that this tribunal would do his unfortunate relative *justice*, which was all that he asked for him at their hands. A body of citizens from Madison county were then in hearing, who came to demand the person of Sharkey, with a view to carrying him at once to Livingston, but our excellent Hinds county committee refused this application, set Sharkey at liberty, and declared their determination to protect him against all further molestation. After this I instituted, in the name of the injured Sharkey, a suit for damages, and recovered $10,000. This affair wound up the concerns of the vigilance committees in Mississippi. All alarm in relation to negro insurrection soon after ceased, and this docile and affectionate race a few years thereafter, during the progress of a fierce and sanguinary civil war, proved that they are the most patient, the most forbearing, and the most magnanimous class of God's rational creatures that ever yet endured the unjust burden of servitude for centuries, and were afterward established in the enjoyment of freedom by the manifest hand of the Deity Himself. Considering the conduct of the sons and daughters of Africa during the war and since, too, so far as we have striven in good faith, and in a reasonable and liberal manner to conciliate them, it becomes us of the Caucasian stock in all time hereafter to

> Be to their faults a little blind,
> And to their virtues very kind,
> Hanging a padlock on the mind.

I have mentioned the man Hardwick that took the most prominent part in the hanging of Captain Bell's favorite servant. In less than a year from that time this individual, as I have already incidentally mentioned, murdered a colored man in the town of Clinton, and was prosecuted for it. This was one of the most ruffianly cases of killing I ever knew. As amiable, honest, and industrious a man as was to be found in all the land was torn by a band of eight or ten white men, with the infernal Hardwick at their head, from the bed of his sick wife, amid the dark hours of the night, upon a mere suspicion of some offense never established against him in proof, tied over a barrel, and given one thousand stripes upon his bare back, such agony being inflicted upon the unfortunate victim that he bit his own tongue in two and died of lockjaw. I had Hardwick taken up immediately and put in close prison, all attempts to bail him proving fruitless, in which confinement he remained until brought to trial. At the end of six months an honest and conscientious jury was persuaded to acquit him on the ground that to hang a white man for murdering one of the colored race might have a tendency to encourage the slaves to rise in insurrection. When will men learn that perfect justice and humanity constitute the wisest policy of the fortunate and the powerful of this world?

I have only time to glance for a moment at the memorable proceedings of the vigilance committees of San Francisco, about which so much has been at different times spoken and written, and in reference to which such contrariety of sentiment at one time prevailed, alike in California and elsewhere. That both of these committees owed their origin to the failure of courts of justice to enforce the laws of the land, and to the gross corruptions which had found their way into the popular elections of that far-off region, no one would now think of denying.

Whether the social necessities existing were of so imperious a nature as to justify the extreme expedients resorted to in this instance I shall not undertake to decide. I will close by the mention of a curious anecdote which bears close connection with the action of the last of these famous committees. The celebrated General Edward C. Baker, after the committee had been organized, and was in full operation, undertook to resist its power in a public speech on the plaza in San Francisco, to which I had the honor of listening. Eloquent as he ever was, and popular as he had been, the furious assemblage refused to listen to him. Having reason to deem his own life even in danger, he left San Francisco suddenly for the city of Sacramento. Nor did he deem it prudent to return to the great metropolis where he had so longed lived until the Presidential election of 1856 came on, when he had it in his power to win back the popular favor by such extraordinary displays of popular eloquence as have rarely marked any political conflict whatever, in support, too, of the Republican Presidential candidate of that period; after which he was cordially invited back by the very people whose menaces of personal violence had driven him into temporary banishment. Upon his return he delivered to a vast crowd in San Francisco, on the last evening of the Presidential canvass, the most thrilling and electrical speech of his life. I have heard him say that when he mounted the stand on that occasion an amiable and accomplished daughter, seated by his side, whispered to him: "This, my dear father, is indeed the greatest triumph of your life."

REMINISCENCE No. XXVI.

RUM—ITS FATAL EFFECTS—DRUNKEN JUDGES, GOVERNORS, AND OFFICERS—A PROHIBITORY LAW YEARS AGO IN MISSISSIPPI—HOW POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS WERE CONDUCTED.

There was, perhaps, nothing more noticeable in the social status of Mississippi, and of several neighboring States, in the period which intervened between the years 1830 and 1840 than the immense quantities of intoxicating drinks consumed by those who dwelt in this much-favored section of the Union. Drunkenness had, indeed, become a common vice, owing to which, and the deplorable fact that nearly all classes of the population went habitually armed, the number of scenes marked with personal violence which occurred it is really astounding to contemplate, even in recollection. At the time that I reached Mississippi it was almost impossible to enter a house of public entertainment anywhere without encountering men in a state of inebriation. The prevailing mischief was confined to no particular class of inhabitants. Nearly all who went to places of public resort anywhere paid more or less homage to Bacchus; and to drink, and to drink occasionally to excess, had positively become so fashionable that a man of strict sobriety was by many looked upon as a cold-blooded and uncongenial wretch, scarcely worthy to live. A refusal to imbibe when called upon to do so was apt to give serious offense, as implying a want of personal respect and amity. A very general notion was prevalent that the habitual use of alcohol—in some one of the many forms in which this terrible element of mischief was prepared for the gratification of an acquired and morbid appetite—was necessary to health,

and thousands involved in this perilous delusion were every day taking poison into their stomachs, the operation of which, though slow and quiet, was just as certain in the end to destroy life as the rifle-shot or cannon-ball. I am painting no fancy sketch when I say that I have often seen judges remarkable for ability and learning, and who before their elevation to the bench had ranked high as lawyers both of learning and eloquence, so much overcome with strong drink while presiding in court, even when important trials were in progress, as almost be unable to sit erect or get through the customary formalities of judicial proceeding without some grotesque and unseemly exhibition which it was exceedingly painful to witness. There were not a few members of the bar also who were found willing to aid as far as in their power to relieve the severity of their grave and useful calling by occasional participation in scenes of convivial enjoyment, and I have had the opportunity of hearing on a number of occasions animated and boisterous speeches from lawyers of no little eminence, both in criminal and civil cases, which they would never have thought of making but for the peculiar inspiration which they had derived from the flowing bowl. No one at that time seemed to suppose it even possible that a political canvass could be conducted with proper sprightliness and vigor unless some special arrangement should have been made in advance for liberal supplies of alcoholic stimulants to the sovereign voters of the land, who it was feared might listen with something like stolid indifference to dull and prosy harangues unless put beforehand under the magnetic influence of intoxicating draughts, known to have been paid for out of the pocket of the speaker to whom they were asked to give audience.

I remember a somewhat amusing incident illustrative of the usual mode of conducting political canvasses in

Mississippi at this period, which I will here briefly relate. Judge Edward Turner, for a long time chief justice of the Supreme Court of the State, and a man of many domestic and social virtues, became a candidate for a seat in the convention which assembled in the city of Jackson, in 1833, for the purpose of amending the constitution of Mississippi. The Senatorial district which he aspired to represent in that body was composed of the counties of Adams and Franklin. His opponent was a young lawyer of some promise, who afterward became a zealous and efficient Methodist preacher and who won not a little distinction also in the Mexican war. The voters and candidates confronted each other at an early stage of the contest in a certain little country town. There was no very elaborate attempt to edify the multitude on this occasion by speech-making, but the use of an expedient far more convenient, and perhaps equally potential sometimes, was relied on for purposes of conciliation. Judge Turner had his large demijohn of whisky in readiness, and in his blandest manner called up the voters indiscriminately to drink with him. With a view to fixing them more fully in his interest this elegant and genial gentleman took it upon himself to help each individual to a drink, handed to him specially in the most affectionate and obsequious manner. This seemed to have a very happy effect, and any man but Dick Stewart, (as we were accustomed to call him,) would have at once given up the contest. But he did not even think for a moment of yielding the field. On the contrary, the state of affairs seemed to have inspired him with increased energy and adroitness. When Judge Turner's demijohn was exhausted Stewart rose up and made known that he had some liquor on the ground also, which he trusted his fellow-citizens would consent to enjoy with him. When the voters gathered round the new supply, he said:

"FELLOW-CITIZENS: My venerable opponent, Judge Turner, deemed it prudent to measure out to you his whisky. I shall do nothing of the sort. Here is my jug, and here are glasses for you all. Come forward, one and all, and help yourselves."

It is almost needless to say that the multitude cheered Stewart most vociferously, and that he beat his venerable opponent in the election several hundred votes.

I do not mean to say that this sort of treating to ardent spirits was indispensable at this time, or afterward, to a man's election in Mississippi. My own experience goes far to disprove this proposition; for I rejoice to have it in my power to say that I never did attempt, in any State where I have lived, to obtain votes by supplying my fellow-citizens with the means of inebriation, either on a large or small scale; and that there has never been a time when I have not looked upon this practice as far worse than the exercise of pecuniary bribery.

But to proceed. There were, forty years ago, in the State of Mississippi, many towns and villages where the magnates of society would assemble regularly every day —not always even excluding the Sabbath—at some favorite hotel or tippling shop, and drink together in what was called a social way, from the hour of ten, or half after ten in the forenoon, until the hour of dinner, which was usually about 1 o'clock P. M.; and I have seen, I am sure, each of those present on these occasions take some five or six drinks on an average, and certainly without suspecting that any one would be silly enough to accuse them of *intemperance*. Nothing was more common than for a company of jolly roysterers to get together, by day or night, for the purpose of having what was called a *frolic*, and seldom did they separate until the appearance of daylight, or until a sufficient number were not remaining upon their legs to keep the scene of festive merriment in lively

and impressive progress. Scenes of disgusting drunkenness sometimes occurred, even in the bosom of grave legislative assemblies, some of which, indeed, might well have reminded one familiar with the pages of Tacitus of those bacchanalian consultations which he describes as having taken place among our worthy kinsmen, the ancient Germans; whom he graphically depictures as often settling the gravest questions of peace and war under the enlivening influences of their ancestral beverage, (which I take to be lager beer;) and when each of those present was armed to the teeth with such weapons as might give force to eloquence that would otherwise possibly have been wanting in persuasive force—or that might supply the means of counteracting what was deemed false logic—by processes far more reliable than the famed *Elenchus* of the Socrato-Platonic school of former days.

I speak with much consideration when I confidently assert that a majority of all the more serious criminal offenses committed in Mississippi during my long residence there were to be traced to the direct influence of intoxicating drinks. Two-thirds, and I think more, of all the instances of killing that occurred took place under circumstances proving conclusively that but for the parties involved in collision having been demented at the time by alcohol no such tragic event was at all likely to have occurred. Those who have not properly explored this subject would be surprised could they in some way be informed how large a number of the social crimes not usually charged to alcohol have owed their origin to its influence, exerted either in a direct or indirect form. I am sure that no experienced lawyer much concerned in divorce cases will be inclined to call in question the assertion which I venture to make, that at least two-thirds of all the applications for the abrogation of the matrimonial tie, now so alarmingly numerous, are the results of intemperance in the

use of stimulating liquids. How many instances are now daily occurring of husbands murdering their wives, fathers slaying their own children, and children their aged and helpless parents, which are found on examination to have been brought about by the same terrible instrumentality! How many large fortunes have been wasted, how many families have been consigned to abject poverty, how many children of bright intellectual promise have been bound in the chains of remediless ignorance, how many hearts of faithful friends have been broken, how much precious blood has been needlessly wasted, how much of individual fame and of national honor has been sacrificed, how much has the general wealth of the Republic been wasted in consequence of the prevalence in our dear native land of that single master-vice, intemperance! The money spent in the purchase of that fatal poison, alcohol, by the people of the United States would, in twenty years, probably pay the whole national debt, succor all the paupers of the land, and secure universal education to all the future men and women of the nation. And all this money is expended in purchasing that which only poisons the physical system and demoralizes and degrades the inner man. How many men who once enjoyed social respectability have been sunk in cureless infamy by habitual indulgence in the use of stimulating liquids! How many cherished friendships have been rudely broken, how many wives constrained to fly from once loved homes, how much genius and learning has been lost to the world from the operation of this cause alone! Many a near and dear relative have I seen hurried to an untimely grave by the undue use of strong drink, who, had they not listened foolishly to the voice of the charmer, might now have been administering comfort and happiness to large circles of loving and admiring friends. How many men of marked and acknowledged ability in my own profession have I not seen swept along by the

fatal love of alcohol to want, to degradation, and to death ere yet they could be considered to have reached the zenith of their fame! How many individuals of all classes have I not been fated to see expiring amid the indescribable agonies of that most horrific of all maladies, known to us moderns as *mania-a-potu*, but which had never made its appearance in the world until the strong alcoholic liquids were brought into common use about three centuries ago! What a countless number of persons creditably connected in society have I not seen at different times passing to the grave as victims to the habitual use of strong drink, who to all appearance had not become at all aware of the real cause of the destruction of their bodily health!

I say it with a feeling of poignant sorrow and chagrin, and yet I assert with great confidence, that at least one-third of my cotemporaries now no longer among the living have been brought to an untimely end by the too free indulgence in the use of strong drink. Every man who drinks habitually is in constant danger of forming a habit of drinking which, after a while he will, be totally unable to throw aside; for the reception of this poison into the stomach, unless it be used as a medicine by drops, as it was so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth in England, will infallibly generate a disease in the most sensitive parts of the nervous system, which, when once it becomes established, experience has shown very soon gets beyond the reach of all curative remedies, and while it is preying upon the system, is every moment acquiring additional force by adding to the appetite for that which originally produced it, undermining the will so as to make all efforts for relief from its domination well nigh hopeless. This stupendous public vice had become so much diffused and apparently so essentially incorporated with the body-politic itself in Mississippi thirty years ago; drunken Governors, drunken legislators, and drunken judges, with many other persons

of wealth and intelligence there, had so long set an example of intemperance to the multitude, and this example had been so extensively imitated—that, painfully ruminating over the condition of the community, and foreseeing the evils of every kind which were evidently menaced for the future—having been elected to a seat in the State Legislature in 1839, to fill a vacancy which had just arisen —I resolved to make one effort to save the Commonwealth as far as might be yet possible from the further experience of such mischief as I have been detailing. With a view to this end I introduced in the House of Representatives a stringent and comprehensive anti-tippling bill, by which all persons whatever were prohibited, under the penalty of fine and imprisonment, from the vending of either vinous or spiritous liquors, to be drunk on the spot, in less quantities than a gallon, and which made it a penal offense for any candidate for office to supply the voters of the State with any quantity whatever of intoxicating liquors pending a canvass, and rendering all such candidates forever incompetent to hold any civil office whatever. There were in this bill other provisions of a kindred character. After a very warm struggle of a week or two I secured the passage of the proposed measure through both houses of the Legislature, which thus became part of the law of the land.

On the morning succeeding this occurrence a spectacle saluted the eyes of the multitude in and about Jackson which proved not a little amusing and gratifying to some. The effigy of the hated author of the anti-tippling law, which menaced grog-drinkers with such cruel deprivation of their accustomed enjoyments, was seen pendant from the boughs of a majestic oak which haply grew there, upon which was inscribed in glowing capitals my own name. I took no notice whatever of this insult, further than to use somewhat more pains than I should

otherwise have put in requisition in order to make it certain that the reformatory enactment which had given so much offense to the votaries of Bacchus should be duly enforced in every part of the State. The beneficial effects produced thereby are yet vividly remembered by thousands. The business of public tippling was almost totally suppressed. The courts of criminal cognizance had hardly anything to do. The principles of social order and decorum prevailed to an extent exceedingly gratifying to the hearts of all true philanthropists, and death from *mania-a-potu* and other kindred maladies was hardly heard of. Unfortunately, though, for the State of Mississippi, demagogism had not yet ceased to exist there, and in a year or two after this most agreeable state of things was unfolded to view a concerted effort was made in various parts of the State to get the anti-tippling law repealed, on the ground that it was a gross infraction of popular rights; which effort, I regret to say, was but too successful. As a natural consequence of this prodigious blunder in legislation the speedy renewal of the evil of intemperance was realized, with all the baleful consequences natural thereto, and in a worse form, perhaps, than would have been the case had no attempt ever been essayed to drive this giant monster from the land. It is indeed sad to reflect that any considerable number of men were to be found in an intelligent community who could suppose that the Creator had bestowed upon the rational being to whom He has given existence the right to destroy their own intellects and debase their own souls, and to scatter wantonly arrows, firebrands, and death through a whole community at their own pleasure. In a country like ours, where the successful solution of the problem of self-government is confessedly dependent upon the intellect and virtue of the people themselves, the strange theory of human rights which has been alluded to is certainly one of a very incom-

prehensible character. As reason and the moral faculties alone distinguish man from the brute creation, so cultivated reason and the proper development of the moral faculties chiefly distinguish the civilized man from the savage. It is, therefore, obviously the duty of all governments, and especially of such as are instituted by the people themselves for the preservation and advancement of their own happiness, to provide by all suitable expedients for the extermination of all evils whatever threatening alike the ultimate subversion of their liberties and the most complete degradation of those from whom all civil power must emanate. The whole system of granting to any class of men the right to vend intoxicating liquids in places of public resort—thus formally attaching the sanction of the government itself to the efforts making to spread abroad the worst social evil which ever assailed the repose and well-being of mankind—should at once be discontinued, else government itself must be justly held responsible for all the mischiefs of every kind which uniform experience has shown to flow from this most prolific source of ill.

I have sometimes thought that the most painfully impressive illustration of the dangers which beset our country at this time from the failure of the governmental authorities among us to unite for the extermination of intemperance—that upas tree of mischief—from the soil of our loved America—was supplied on the 4th day of March, 1865, when a Vice President-elect was inducted into the second office of the Republic in point of dignity in a state of such beastly and disgraceful intoxication as would scarcely have been tolerated even in a dramshop or a brothel. No scene at all similar is recorded in the history of civilized nations. After one such humiliating occurrence as this, it is surely time that we should look out seriously for the honor of the Republic, and see that

in all future time no such desecration of the high offices of governmental trust shall ever again occur.

Strangers to our country and its institutions will, I fear, suspect that there must be some radical unsoundness in our social organization if such conduct as that just alluded to, and the demoniacal influences to which it was doubtless in a great degree attributable, can be brought to light without awakening the liveliest feelings of disgust and indignation.

It is possible that the views herein expressed and the unvarnished statement of facts I have ventured to make may prove a little unsavory to some who prefer expediency to principle, and the unjust laudation of the unworthy to the frank exhibition of their criminal aberrations from duty. In all that I have said on this occasion I have obeyed no monitor but truth, and the opinions to which I have given expression are those which I have long entertained, and such also as I have never been either ashamed or afraid to avow openly. Of one thing I have been long thoroughly convinced: until we become a sober, thoughtful, and righteous people, and dare to do our duty and our whole duty toward man and God, honestly, fearlessly, and patriotically, despite the arts of demagogues and dissemblers of all classes and complexions, we need not hope that the solid and enduring glory which our venerated fathers have taught us to recognize as the legitimate and logical result of the establishment and maintenance of free institutions can ever be fully realized.

REMINISCENCE No. XXVII.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF JUSTICE CURTIS, OF MASSACHUSETTS; REVERDY JOHNSON, OF MARYLAND; GEORGE E. BADGER, OF NORTH CAROLINA—CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE DISTINGUISHED STATESMEN.

When Mr. Curtis, of Massachusetts, was appointed to a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the Union, I recollect that his elevation to a position to which he was so admirably adapted gave very general satisfaction to the country. His high rank at the bar as a man of strong, astute, and scrutinizing mind, his spotless moral character, and his known exemption from all the extreme opinions and prejudices of party and section were well calculated to give repose to the public mind, and to assure those who had previously doubted the stability of our institutions that, at least, one additional safeguard had been now added to the frame-work of our National Union.

Not knowing the newyl-created judge myself, I inquired of Mr. Webster what sort of a man precisely Mr. Curtis was, when he answered me in substance thus: "Mr. Curtis I have long known most intimately. He is a man of sterling integrity; his mind is one of great vigor and activity; he has not a particle of sectional prejudice; he is unswervingly devoted to the cause of the Union, and is, in my judgment, the best common law lawyer now in Massachusetts." All this was exceedingly agreeable to me to learn, and upon such very high authority, too. I remember that I was very near asking of Mr. Webster on this occasion whether he thought Mr. Curtis superior in legal learning and in general ability to Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, or George E. Badger, of North Carolina, as

for both these gentlemen I had long cherished very high esteem, as I knew Mr. Webster to do also. I did not propound this interesting inquiry simply because I thought that Mr. Webster might himself feel a little unwilling to pass upon the comparative merits of these personages, all of whom stood so high in his regard, and toward each of whom he probably cherished feelings of about equal kindness.

This colloquial interview with the illustrious sage of Marshfield was brought very vividly to my mind the other day on a visit which I made to the hall of the Supreme Court of the United States, where I had the unexpected pleasure of seeing the venerated Nestor of the Maryland bar engaged in the argument of a cause of some complexity, involving the doctrine of the world-renowned "rule in Shelley's case." I was a little surprised at finding Mr. Johnson thus occupied, as I had been several weeks before informed that he had of late undergone a complete obscuration of the power of vision. But here was mine ancient friend, now almost an octogenarian, standing nearly as erect as ever, apparently in most robust health, and with an appearance of cheerfulness and animation seldom to be seen in any one whatever of his advanced years. I listened to the whole of Mr. Johnson's argument, and I have no hesitation in declaring that it seemed to me to be most complete in all its parts; being clear, methodical, and convincing, and delivered in a manner so graceful and impressive as to show that the last twenty years have fallen upon the physical and mental faculties of this remarkable man with an influence so gentle and innocuous as hardly to be perceptible in its effects, even to the most scrutinizing observer. Mr. Johnson's voice is almost as strong and penetrating in its tones, when he chooses to elevate it a little, as it ever was; his gesticulation is yet graceful and significant, and on this occasion he in-

dulged in one or two facetious allusions which awakened a quiet smile upon more than one of the visages of the grave dispensers of justice whom he was addressing. I could hardly believe him to be blind while he yet continued to speak, but when his remarks had drawn to a close and he proceeded to walk in the direction of his hat, this sad deprivation became painfully evident. I approached him and gave my hand, whispering at the same time my own name in his ear, when he greeted me with all his customary cordiality, and, referring to his loss of sight, said, pleasantly enough, that he lamented not to be able to discover in my appearance those evidences of health which he did not doubt would have been otherwise perceptible to him. He then, for a moment or two, referred to the cotemporaneous topics of the day, and made several inquiries as to particular public men of a nature clearly indicating that he was yet feeling a deep interest in what was going on in different parts of the Republic.

I embrace this opportunity of offering one or two observations upon this noted personage and upon some of the most memorable scenes of his long public career.

The father of Reverdy Johnson was a distinguished member of the bar of Maryland for many years, and is acknowledged to have been one of the most learned and able judges which that State, so prolific in men of intellect, power, and culture, has ever had. His distinguished son was born on the 21st of May, 1796, at Annapolis, obtained license to practice when he was not yet 21 years old, and located in Upper Marlboro', in Prince George's county, where he remained for two years, during which period he acted as Deputy Attorney General in what was then known as the first judicial district of the State. He removed to the city of Baltimore in the autumn of 1817, and has resided in that city or in its immediate neighborhood ever since. His first argument in

the Supreme Court of the United States will be found reported in 12th Wheaton, and was made in the case of Brown *vs.* Maryland.

His mind is one of uncommon strength and acuteness; his temperament is ardent and generous; his heart is kind and sympathizing to an extent not often known among those intensely devoted to the harrassing and irritating duties of the calling in which he has spent so many years of his laborious and eventful life. He is personally brave almost to a fault, and is distinguished above most of his cotemporaries for a polish and high-bred courtesy of demeanor and an ever-flowing geniality of spirit which have made him, if possible, even more an object of general love and sympathy than of admiration and confidence. During his long service in the National Senate I feel confident that he never made an enemy, and in his numberless conflicts at the bar I judge him to have been equally fortunate. No one, I am sure, doubts that he is a man of most abundant legal learning, and his extraordinary success in the argument of the most difficult causes has for the last thirty years commanded for him a very high place in the estimation of all the admirers of juridical erudition and consummate argumentative power.

As a politician Reverdy Johnson has never (at least since I knew him) been for a moment what is known as a thorough-going party man. He has always been remarkable for that true manliness and independence, both of thought and action, which no mere servitor of faction has ever been known conspicuously to display. He has ever thought it quite possible that the best organized and most honest political party may be occasionally involved in errors of opinion, and be seduced also into serious abuses of power; and when the particular party with which he chanced to stand associated has seemed to him at any time to be pursuing a course detrimental to the vital in-

terests of the country, he has never been slow in expressing his decided dissent. When opposing the measures of an administration with which he had no political affiliation, and to whose further continuance in power he was altogether averse, he has been always fair and liberal, and on no occasion has he been known to indulge in petty malevolence or low-bred chicane. I remember with much pleasure that in the winter of 1847–'8 he yielded a manly and efficient support to the war policy of President Polk; and, did I choose to do so, I could easily specify numerous other occasions where his conduct, under circumstances peculiarly trying, was as notably upright and independent as in the instance just referred to. I believe that there is no doubt that Reverdy Johnson was in the early stages of his political career a decided and zealous Democrat, and that he afterward became an equally decided and zealous Whig. He always openly avowed the opinion that slavery was an evil, but opposed in the most strenuous manner the efforts of extreme abolitionists to overthrow it by unjust and unconstitutional means. He was alike opposed to consolidation and to secession. He was a warm supporter of the Compromise measures of 1850, but sustained Mr. Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill, and opposed with the utmost earnestness that gigantic fraud, the Lecompton bill. He had no hand in bringing on the late unhappy war; but while it was in progress he gave a firm and steady support to those measures which he judged necessary to the defense of the Government against armed rebellion, and to the maintenance of the Federal Union against all the attempts made for its overthrow. He rejoiced at the return of peace, and gave his sanction to the efforts of the Andrew Johnson administration to carry into effect his well-known reconstructive policy—so far, at least, as he thought his recommendations judicious and authorized by the Constitution. Upon the whole, perhaps no

American statesman can be mentioned whose general course has evinced less of servility to party, or a willingness to sacrifice principle to the temporary purposes of faction, than the venerable individual of whom I am now speaking. In reviewing the checkered political career which Reverdy Johnson has run I have been able to find no instance in which he has seemed to have been even for a single instant forgetful of the dignity of his own character, or regardless of his country's welfare and honor. If he has often felt compelled to modify his own attitude toward the leading statesmen of the Republic, or toward the political parties of which they seemed to be the recognized exponents for the time being, the circumstances attendant upon such change of position on his part have always been such as to leave his public integrity unquestioned, and to vindicate the absolute purity of his motives. I have not had the happiness to be always in harmony with him touching the great public questions which have commanded the attention of the country during the last twenty-five years; but from my earliest acquaintance with Mr. Johnson my esteem for his abilities and my confidence in his integrity have been constantly on the increase.

Those who have read with attention the pages of Macaulay will not fail to recognize some similitude between the characters of Reverdy Johnson, as I have endeavored to portray it, and that of the celebrated Lord Halifax in England, who is known at different stages of his splendid and useful career to have co-operated sometimes with one of the great political parties of his day, and sometimes with the opposing one, according to his own conscientious convictions of duty at the moment, and to have evinced no sensitiveness whatever as to the charges to which he was constantly exposing himself of *inconsistency* and *fickleness*, and which fastened upon him the appellation of "The

Trimmer." "Instead of quarreling with his nickname," says Macaulay, "he assumed it as a title of honor, and vindicated, with great vivacity, the dignity of the appellation. Everything good, he said, trimmed between extremes. The temperate zone trims between the climate in which men are roasted and the climate in which they are frozen. The English Church trims between the Anabaptist madness and the Papist lethargy. The English Constitution trims between Turkish despotism and Polish anarchy. Virtue is nothing but a just temper between propensities any one of which, if indulged to excess, becomes vice. Nay, the perfection of the Supreme Being himself consists in the exact equilibrium of attributes, none of which could preponderate without disturbing the whole moral and physical order of the universe."

In concluding what I have here ventured to say of Mr. Johnson—whose exemption from extreme party bias has greatly distinguished him for many years among the illustrious public men of the country—I shall take the liberty of repeating here what I have already published in a different form as to this very interesting matter: "Those familiar with the public career of Cicero—who was unquestionably the ablest and most politic statesman of ancient times, and if not the first of orators, ancient or modern, only inferior to Demosthenes—will remember that there was much in his conduct at different periods which indicated that he too had learned that it was neither wise nor safe for a public man of great eminence and of extended influence to suffer any political faction, struggling fiercely for ascendency, to appropriate to itself exclusively his whole weight and influence. Accordingly, we find him now the champion of the Knights, now the vindicator of the Senate, and now again the zealous advocate of popular rights. While it seemed possible to effect a reconcilement between Pompey and Cæsar he joined the faction of neither,

professing friendship and respect for both, and striving to prevent such a collision between them as would be likely to bring on civil war. When, in spite of his efforts to the contrary, war between these celebrated chieftains commenced, it is known that Cicero hesitated long whether to join one or the other of them or to remain neutral!—as his friend Atticus so warmly advised him to do, and when, finally, he withdrew from Rome and sought refuge in Pompey's camp, he found it so utterly impossible for himself to play the part of a servile adherent of faction that he was once or twice exposed to the greatest personal danger from the insane violence of those who, forgetful of the cause of freedom, had become the willing slaves of him whose ruin was soon to be consummated at Pharsalia. Even Cato is known to have condemned him for not remaining upon neutral ground, so as to have it in his power to interpose effectively, should some favorable opportunity of doing so present itself, for the restoration of domestic peace; and long after Pompey had perished, Cicero himself more than once expressed doubt whether it would not have been better for Rome and the general interests of freedom for Cæsar to have been triumphant than that he should have been compelled to succumb to his more selfish and less magnanimous rival." Such a man as this could hardly have been expected to "give up to party what was meant for mankind," and when the acrid prejudices engendered by our unhappy civil war shall have completely passed away, few, I am confident, will at all doubt that the uniform moderation and liberality which have so nobly marked the course of Reverdy Johnson for the last fifteen eventful years have been far more creditable both to his heart and his understanding than would have been all the fleeting *éclat* acquired by the shallow and heartless demagogues of vari-

ous hues and complexions with whom he has been from time to time more or less in contact.

George E. Badger, of North Carolina has left behind him a reputation for solid virtue and sound practical intellect which will probably survive as long as this great Republic shall itself continue in existence. I knew him well, both in public and in private life. His heart was full of kind and generous sentiments. Through a long course of laborious public exertion his integrity was never called in question. For many years he was the acknowledged head of the bar of North Carolina, and in the Supreme Court of the United States he enjoyed for a long period a large and lucrative practice, and sustained a very high character both for juridical learning and for general literary attainments. His manner as a speaker was gentle, polished, and engaging. He was always perfectly familiar with the cases which he undertook to argue, and never failed to discuss them with a clearness and force which was sure to command the respect and admiration of all who listened to him. He was always courteous and affable, and on no occasion evinced the least irritability or disrespect toward those with whom he was thrown into conflict.

In the National Senate, where he long held a seat, he was always a great favorite. In that body he was not a very frequent speaker, but when he did participate in debate he was ever listened to with marked respect and satisfaction. A truer patriot has never lived. He was eminently conservative in all his opinions, and had as little of partisan bitterness as any man I have known. He commenced public life as a Federalist of the Marshall and Webster school, and to the principles first avowed by him he ever most tenaciously adhered. He regarded the dogma of secession as little less than the emanation of political insanity, in which respect I am inclined to think

he did not seriously err. He objected even to the Constitution of the United States being called the "Federal Constitution," this appellation intimating, as he conceived, the idea of a *foedus* or *league* between the States embraced in the National Union. With Mr. Webster, he insisted that the States of the Union were not bound together by a compact between them as sovereignties, but that they, and the people they contained, had been existing ever since the year 1789 under a government possessing nearly all the great attributes of sovereignty, and absolutely supreme within the sphere of its operation. No man struggled harder than Mr. Badger to ward off the evils of secession. He stood bravely up in the Senate for many years as the honest and inflexible opponent of sectional extremists, alike of the North and of the South. When war came he could truthfully assert that he had done nothing himself to bring it on; and all the bloody and horrible scenes with which its progress was marked awakened in his mind sentiments of unmitigated distress and horror. I met with him at his own house in Raleigh, during the second year of the war, and had much conversation with him. He was at that time decidedly of opinion that the conflict of arms then in progress had originated in the most deplorable want of true statesmanship in several distinct quarters, and that there was nothing in the circumstances connected with the elevation of Mr. Lincoln which at all justified Mr. Davis and his associates in commencing a contest that could not be otherwise than ruinous to the South, and dangerous to public liberty everywhere. The strange and unpardonable abuses of power which had already occurred in Richmond filled him both with surprise and indignation. He never deemed it even possible that the States of the South could succeed in establishing a separate republic; and even had he thought otherwise, such a consummation would have

been to him anything but desirable. At the time I visited him last the organic convention of North Carolina was in session in Raleigh, and he was a member of that body. So decided was he in his opposition to the despotism then existing in Richmond that he thought very seriously of introducing resolutions as a member of the convention denunciatory of the leading measures of the secession oligarchy then in power, and looking to a retrocession of North Carolina from the Confederate alliance, in which, as he supposed, she had become most unwisely entangled. He seriously advised with me in regard to the expediency of this proceeding, and I confess to have counseled him against it—mainly though upon the ground that the popular mind of the South was not then prepared to sanction a movement which I should otherwise have greatly rejoiced to see occur. A year after this I again visited this enlightened and high-spirited gentleman. A great and melancholy change had then recently occurred both in his mental and physical condition. He had been stricken with paralysis, that terrible foe to intellect, and his once powerful and brilliant mind had become sadly obscured and enfeebled. He enunciated with much difficulty; his memory, both as to facts and words, had grown dim and confused, and he had been forever cut off from the enjoyment of that high colloquial interchange in which he had always taken so much delight. My last interview with this pure-minded and amiable man was to me most sad and affecting, and I took leave of him without the smallest hope of ever seeing him again on this side of the grave. *Requiescat in pace!*

When alluding in what has been written above to the interview between Mr. Badger and myself in regard to the propriety of his originating at that time a reactionary movement in the convention of which he was a member against the further submission to Confederate authority

of that Commonwealth of which he was a citizen, and my advice to him not then to incur the dangers consequent upon such a proceeding, I should regret to be understood as being at that time at all unwilling to see such an experiment tried had there been ground for a reasonable hope of its success. I had long before this period become satisfied of the absurdity as well as of the criminality of all attempts to break up the Federal Union, and I had always been of opinion that nothing could justify armed opposition to the Government established by our fathers but the actual sufferance of "intolerable oppression." The fallacious character of the extreme State-rights theory had been already completely demonstrated by the open assertion on the part of the Richmond authorities, both in Congress and elsewhere, of the right to prevent by military force, should it become necessary to resort to this expedient, any one or more of the States called sovereign from going back into the old Union, should they, or any one of them, judge this to be desirable; so that the boasted right of secession was now virtually acknowledged, even by those in whose plodding brains it had originated, as a sham and a deception. Having seceded once, no further exertion of this *sovereign* right was held to be allowable! It is, accordingly, a well-known historic fact, which no truth-loving member of the late Confederate Congress will undertake to deny, that on one occasion the proposition was warmly urged in the popular branch of that body to coerce the State of North Carolina into submission to Confederate authority should her people undertake to rescind the ordinance of secession, which had been previously adopted, and that when I undertook to protest, as I did, against the employment of military force against one of the States, asserted by the Confederate Constitution itself to be absolutely and unqualifiedly sovereign, the majority of the House of Representatives at once voted to go into

secret session, in order to discuss this grave and delicate question with closed doors, so that they might have it in their power to crush alleged treason in the bud before those who had become restless under the unfeeling tyranny then in operation could even become aware of the danger to which they were exposing themselves.

Surely this occurrence should of itself be sufficient to warn our countrymen against the perilous character of this secession remedy, and prevent in all coming time the imitation of this most mischievous and woful example. There is no safety to either States or people save under the national flag, as all will assuredly find sooner or later who presume to make unprovoked war against its sacred authority.

REMINISCENCE No. XXVIII.

DAVIS, BENJAMIN, AND OTHERS.

It has been thought by many that one of the most impolitic and censurable wars that the world has known was that which owed its rise recently to the vaulting ambition of Louis Napoleon; a war for the prevention of which that cool-headed and profound statesman, M. Thiers, delivered one of the most powerful, eloquent, and fearless speeches of his life; but, alas! in vain. The total unpreparedness of France for such a conflict as she was now precipitated into, and the masterly preparations of every kind so providently made by the Prussian Government to meet the unauthorized invaders of her soil, constitute one of the most impressive and instructive chapters of modern history. After such a prodigious blunder on the part of a man so superior in all respects to Mr. Davis, the recent President of what was called "The Confederate States of America," it should excite less of wonder, perhaps, that the latter personage and his aspiring *confreres* should have so insanely urged the "cotton States" of the South into a war with the wisely-framed and admirably-accoutered Government, whose downfall they so foolishly thought it was in their power to accomplish. The Government so wantonly assailed may be set down as representing, at the moment when the war was initiated by Mr. Davis, the power and resources of nearly twenty-five millions of people. To the cotton States alone could the plotters of rebellion look for co-operative aid: and, making allowance for the strength of the Union element existing in all the States of the South from the beginning to the end of this

unhappy contest, and for that of the African element also, which all discerning men foresaw from the beginning, should the conflict be at all prolonged, would be infallibly wielded against the Southern claim to independence, no one can suppose that as many as five millions of people could at any time have been found, during the four years of terrible suffering through which it was the fate of the unhappy and deluded South to pass, (including men, women, and children,) whose hearts could be regarded as warmly enlisted in a cause having so little in it to command respect and awaken sympathy among those who had no hand in the origination of hostilities. Besides, the strong-willed and resolute men whom the rash and improvident Southern Senators and Representatives had left behind them in Washington city, henceforward to wield all the thunders of State without serious let or embarrassment from any quarter, were possessed of a considerable force of regular soldiers, besides the navy, and abundant resources of every kind for the purposes of self-defense and for the prosecution of warlike enterprises in any quarter, whether on land or water, while all the States of the old world were open to them, and the sympathizers with free government everywhere would be ready to send to them the most ample supplies of all kinds that might be needed—while there were millions of soldiers beyond the ocean who only awaited the reception of a friendly invitation to fly across the deep in order to aid in defending that national emblem for the support of which our fathers had nearly a century before so solemnly pledged their "lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor."

If the disparity between the parties to this war was so marked in the respects specified, how much must that disparity have been aggravated by Mr. Davis' own gross and now ascertained incompetency, and the singular and in-

deed almost ludicrous imbecility of nearly all those whom he soon called around him as his Cabinet counselors, or placed in the most responsible positions connected with the military and naval movements needful to be carried forward! But Mr. Davis and his official associates had no correct conception of the true character and dimensions of the war into which they had so hastily plunged, as was afterward in fact confessed in many a lugubrious harangue, and in more than one whining official document. These gentlemen did not believe that the conflict would endure for a twelvemonth, and they were even weak enough to calculate strongly upon Northern aid, Ex-President Pierce and several others, whose letters to Mr. Davis have recently seen the light, having shamefully plied this most gullible personage with secret promises of support: upon which he had built his hopes of one day wielding an imperial scepter. As to the interposition of foreign Powers in behalf of the now belligerent States of the South, though many deceitful assurances were received from abroad at different periods of the contest, no one of sound intellect anywhere now supposes that either the French or the English Government ever thought of embroiling itself in a transatlantic civic feud, a formal enlistment in which would, in all probability, bring upon it swift and assured destruction. The vain and shallow-minded Davis evidently thought far otherwise as to this matter when he spoke at Jackson, Miss., just before leaving that place for the city of Montgomery, where he had been chosen President of the Confederate States, thus: "England will not allow our great staples to be dammed up within our present limits. The starving thousands in their midst would not allow it. We have nothing to apprehend from blockade. But if they attempt invasion by land we must *take the war out of our territory*. If war must come it must be upon Northern and not upon South-

ern soil." So thought the boasting Napoleon the Little when he dashed forth so chivalrously from Paris to besiege Berlin!

When Mr. Davis reached Stevenson, on his way to Montgomery, he said:

"Your border States will gladly come into our Southern Confederacy in sixty days, as we will be their only friends. England will recognize us, and a glorious future is before us. The grass will grow in the Northern cities where the pavements have been worn off by the tread of commerce. We will carry war where it is easy to advance; where food for the sword and torch awaits our armies in the densely populated cities; and though they (the enemy) may come and spoil our crops, we can raise them as before, while they can not rear the cities which took years of industry and millions of money to build."

It was in this spirit that Mr. Davis' Secretary of War, Mr. Walker, on the night after the storming of Fort Sumter, declared publicly that "the Confederate flag would be soon seen flying from the top of the American Capitol."

It is not possible that I should cherish *reminiscences* of any kind connected with the conventional or governmental proceedings in Montgomery. I thank heaven that I was not a member of that ill-assorted convention. I am equally thankful that I was not among those who inspired the action of the new Government of Montgomery. Tennessee, of which State I have been a resident for fifteen years past, had not then become engulfed in the whirlpool of rebellion. Had Virginia remained firm she never would have been. By what means Mr. Davis managed to become President I never exactly knew, though I have learned through quite a direct channel that he received for this office in the convention in which he was chosen a majority of *one vote* only over Howell Cobb, of Georgia. He was only elected to the place of Provisional President. Had not hostilities been actually commenced at once he would certainly have been beaten in the popu-

lar election which afterward occurred. It was, therefore, all-important to him that the war should be begun as soon as possible, for nothing could be more certain than that the election of a new executive chief in the midst of war would not be deemed safe or prudent. Hence the precipitate order to fire on Fort Sumter which was dispatched to Charleston.

And now the state of war virtually placed everything in Mr. Davis' incompetent hands. The border States, as had been so often predicted, were, one after another, with one or two exceptions, dragged into the contest.

Having no respect for Mr. Davis' capacity; having not the least confidence in his sincerity and manliness; knowing him to be vain, selfish, overbearing, ambitious, intriguing, and a slave to his prejudices and partialities; not having had the least personal intercourse with him at that time for years; knowing well that he had cherished an undying hatred for me ever since I had beaten him for the office of Governor of Mississippi in 1851, and had thus aided in thwarting the scheme which he and others had then set on foot to withdraw the Southern States from the Federal Union, it may seem a little surprising to some that I should have consented to occupy for a moment a seat in the Confederate Congress. But it was mainly because I entertained such an unfavorable opinion of Mr. Davis, and because I painfully distrusted his aims and purposes, that I was willing to come near to him in an official capacity; that thus I might have it in my power to keep watch over all his movements, and aid as far as might be possible in disappointing his projects of personal ambition. I certainly intended to give a faithful and true support to the Confederate cause after I had become enlisted in it, as I indisputably did; but I did not intend to let Mr. Davis become an emperor if I could prevent it, nor allow his servitors in Congress to organize a military

despotism in Richmond upon the false pretext that they were extreme devotees to State rights and to Southern independence. In point of fact I was never at the Presidential Mansion *once* during my four years' stay in Richmond, and not a day passed while I occupied a seat in the Confederate Congress that was not more or less signalized by my vehement opposition to Mr. Davis and to most of the members of his infamous Cabinet, whom I well knew to be absolute slaves to his will—mercenary to unscrupulousness; corrupt, and contemptible. Almost every day I felt that my life was in danger; but every day I was more and more zealous in my opposition to Mr. Davis and his favorite measures of policy, and to the corrupt and profligate schemes of his special friends and supporters. It is eminently painful to me to speak of these things, but the time has come when the truth must be told. A great experiment of States-right secession has been made, and it is important that the world should know precisely what baneful consequences resulted from this experiment, in order that no such insane and deplorable attempt shall again be essayed in any part of this broad Union, and in order that all may be solemnly warned not to take even the first step toward that evil state of things which was soon to be realized in Richmond. I do not believe that a more heartless and grinding despotism has been anywhere known since the days of Dionysius of Syracuse than the one there set on foot. Upon the pretext of *military necessity* all power was concentrated in the hands of Mr. Davis and his myrmidons, and not a particle of this power was intrusted to them that they did not criminally and corruptly transcend and abuse. By a shameful act of servility Mr. Davis was given authority to suspend the great charter of liberty whenever and wherever he pleased, and this was done on his own earnest solicitation. A bill was passed called the

"Forcible Impressment Law," which placed all the means of subsistence for men and domestic animals completely under the control of Mr. Davis and his official servitors, a large proportion of whom were dishonest and oppressive beyond anything which can be conceived of, save by those who came in contact with that terrible system of fraud and violence which they introduced. A conscription law was passed which brought under Mr. Davis' command every able-bodied man in the South between the ages of sixteen and forty-five; and all who refused to serve in the Confederate army against the paternal government of their fathers were subject to be shot as for desertion. When the bill for this purpose was upon its passage I offered thirteen different amendments to it intended to correct palable *unconstitutionalities;* and all these were rapidly voted down; when, together with only a small number of others, I voted against the measure. This law of conscription was most rigorously and cruelly enforced, and was the cause, not only of very general popular disgust, but the fatal enfeeblement of the Confederate army by actual desertion. A sweeping confiscation act was passed, designed to take away all the property of those who anywhere within the limits of the Confederate States did not give open countenance and support to the cause of the rebellion. This law was afterward so amplified and extended by amendment, at the instance of Mr. Perkins, of Louisiana—a special devotee and confidant of Mr. Davis—as to embrace the property of men, women, and children, wheresoever located, that might chance to be then absent, who, holding property in the South, did not immediately return within the confines of the Confederate States and take an active part in the war. When this most nefarious amendment was under consideration I earnestly protested against it, and brought to the attention of the mover that such men as the venerable Dr. Duncan and

Leven P. Marshall, of New York, both formerly of Mississippi, would be stripped by this law of the most of what they were worth, though their age and other causes had prevented their taking any decided interest in the war; to which Mr. Perkins responded that it was just such men as these that he wished to bring within the operation of the law. I then ventured to mention that there were two most amiable and accomplished ladies of the city of Nashville—Mrs. Porter, the daughter of the venerable Felix Grundy, and Mrs. Player, the stepdaughter of John Bell—who would be ruined by this law; for one of them was in Philadelphia and the other in Hartford, for the education of their children respectively; when I was again answered that it was precisely such cases as those described by me which it was desired to reach. And so this law passed; and had the Confederate cause triumphed, and Mr. Davis been continued in power, verily it would have been enforced to the letter!

At last a member from Mississippi came one morning into the House of Representatives and offered a bill for adoption which proposed the immediate and *universal establishment of martial law, and for an indefinite period of time*, and this movement was notoriously inspired by Mr. Davis himself. I got up immediately and denounced it as a cold-blooded and unprincipled attempt to establish an armed despotism, at which the proposer grew affrighted. He came into the House next morning and asked to be allowed to withdraw it; but, as I made stern objection to this, it was not withdrawn, and now remains a permanent monument of infamy and reproach. A slavish Congress even went so far in its devotion to Mr. Davis as to adopt a *passport law*, making it criminal even for a member of Congress to leave Richmond except under the sign-manual of Judah P. Benjamin, Mr. Davis' Secretary of State, and the known writer of his executive messages.

A few months before this evil apparition of a Government, built upon the basis of extreme States' rights and secession, broke up, a bill or resolution was introduced and passed unanimously in the Confederate Senate, providing for the payment of $7,000 in gold to Mr. Jefferson Davis as part of his presidential salary of $25,000. This was evidently intended as a preliminary step toward paying the whole $25,000 in gold thereafter. The bill had been under consideration in the body where it originated for several days, and had been much discussed in the Richmond newspapers, so that Mr. Davis was bound to know that it was before Congress. By existing law his salary was payable alone in Confederate paper, and such was the distinct understanding when his second election occurred. His remarkable physiognomy stood visibly impressed upon every Confederate note, so that the payment of his salary in anything but Confederate paper was fatally to discredit the only currency we had. Mr. Davis had a dwelling-house supplied to him; and furniture, fuel, and provision for some six horses at the Government's expense. The members of Congress were content to receive as the recompense of their legislative labors Confederate money, though it was now worth only ten cents on the dollar. The Confederate soldiers would have been glad to get their own wretched pay in the paper currency, but could not even get that. The poor fellows were, most of them, in rags and barefoot. When this legislative *monstrum horrendum* reached the House, I rose in my place, and said that I would move a test vote; I wished to know how many men there were slavish and corrupt enough to vote for so infamous a measure, and I moved to put it on the table, calling for the yeas and nays. To the honor of the body, be it spoken, only seven persons had the unblushing audacity to vote yea! Some of these, I learn, are now complaining most vehemently that the Congress of the United

States recently increased the President's salary from $25,000 to $50,000, though every man of sense knows that $50,000 will hardly go as far as $10,000 would have done, in the purchase of the necessaries of life, in the days of our earlier Presidents.

I have not stated a hundredth part of the enormities the enactment of which I was daily compelled to witness in Richmond. I hope never to be compelled to detail all I witnessed there. I shall spend no time upon Mr. Davis' cruel persecution of such meritorious officers as Joe Johnston, Beauregard, Gustavus Smith, Stonewall Jackson, and others; nor shall I explain here how the last-mentioned personage was prevented from retiring abruptly from the Confederate service, as a consequence of the continued annoyances to which he was subjected, by the special interposition of the Virginia Legislature. Nor need I expatiate here upon Mr. Davis' unpardonable adherence to such men as Bragg and Hindman, both of whom, as I repeatedly proved in Congress, by irrefutable testimony, were covered thickly with the blood of innocent men whom they had murdered deliberately and without the least authority even of what we at that time recognized as law. Nor shall I advert to the fact that Mr. Davis had notoriously kept in the office of Commissary General, in opposition to almost universal public sentiment, the infamous Northup, a man once confined in a mad-house, and then obviously in an unsound state of mind, whose administration of the commissary department had been such as almost to break up the army by starvation, and that in spite of all the exposures which I had from time to time made of his malefactions he still held on to him until he could get no respectable person to hold the Secretaryship of War, except on the condition of this man's removal. These are indeed most painful reminis-

cences, a minute record of which would only awaken profitless disgust and horror.

At length the time came when there was no longer ground for rational hope that the Confederate cause could be upheld for even three months longer. On consultation with several of the ablest and most worthy military commanders in and about Richmond, as to the possibility of our continuing to hold out against the overwhelming Union force then in the neighborhood of Richmond, these gentlemen all expressed the opinion that the success of the Confederate cause had become utterly hopeless. I then went into the Confederate Congress, armed in full proof as to this matter, and urged that Mr. Davis should be at once and urgently requested to open negotiations for peace. I even went so far as to show to that body that if peace were then asked for it could be at once obtained, and on honorable terms at the hands of Mr. Lincoln; and that should we defer action on this subject until the month of March, 1865—three months thereafter—the Congress just elected, who would then come into power, would be sure to exact terms far more harsh and rigorous than those which Mr. Lincoln was then inclined to exact. I urged that those who now persevered in continuing a hopeless war would make themselves responsible for all the precious blood that might be thereafter shed. But I should have talked with about as much effect if I had been addressing the dead.

In despair of obtaining peace by any other means I consulted with a majority of my own colleagues in Congress from Tennessee, and with their full sanction I determined to set off for Washington, in order to ascertain from Mr. Lincoln's own lips what conditions of peace he would be willing to accord to us. If just and honorable terms should be named to me I was to bring back these terms to Richmond, divulge them there, and appeal to the people of the South, at their homes, and to our sol-

diers in camp, to put an end to the further effusion of blood, whether Mr. Davis wished it or not. I knew that this experiment would be a perilous one, but I resolved to undertake it at all hazards. There was no other course left, for I perfectly well knew that Mr. Davis would never make peace except on the basis of Southern independence. Still, if independence should at last be secured, he expected his temples to be encased in an imperial crown, and that he, Louis Napoleon, and some Emperor on Mexican soil acting under Napoleonic direction, would thereafter control the destinies of two hemispheres. As to Mr. Davis' own hopes and plans, as well as the earnest wishes of his admiring and confidential friends, I could not have the least doubt.

How, after I left Richmond, Mr. Davis was persuaded to send three commissioners down the James river to meet Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, in order to treat of peace; how Mr. Lincoln offered terms to which the South could have honorably acceded—terms *embracing universal amnesty*, and perhaps a good deal more; how, when these commissioners returned to Richmond and were refused permission to divulge the favorable language used by President Lincoln in his interview with them, for fear that Congress and the country might consent to peace on the terms proposed; what arts were used to blind and deceive the people of the South in regard to the scene between Mr. Lincoln and the peace commissioners at the mouth of the James river—all with a view of keeping up the war spirit; how, after the lapse of a week or two, the Confederate Congress, at last finding out Mr. Davis' true character and becoming satisfied of his utter incompetency, by a sort of *coup d'etat*, stripped him of all military power and substituted for him in regard to the management of all military affairs the noble and high-minded Lee, I shall leave to be more fully explained by others; the same not being strictly a subject of my own personal reminiscence.

REMINISCENCE No. XXIX.

MR. LINCOLN—MR. DAVIS—THE PEACE COMMISSIONERS—MR. STEPHENS' DISCLOSURES.

Since the days of Sesostris no war has occurred so important, alike in its character and its consequences, as that which was brought to an end on the soil of America eight years ago; and those who won renown in that war, either as sage and patriotic statesmen, or as brave, energetic, skillful, yet upright, humane, and magnanimous commanders of armies, may be well regarded as having, by their commingled wisdom and valor, secured to themselves the respect and admiration of the present and of all future generations. Surely the time will come, and I would fain believe that it is even now not far distant, when all those who honestly and energetically toiled in this struggle—who wisely thought and boldly and eloquently spoke or wrote touching the grand questions connected with its rise and progress—or who incurred all the dangers and discomforts of a war so wasting and sanguinary, under the undoubting conviction that they were moving forward in the pathway of duty, will be universally recognized as entitled to the affectionate esteem and reverence of all who are capable of duly estimating pure and elevated motives of action, and those high-souled and manly achievements to which such motives alone can prompt. That there were men of high ability and of eminent moral worth on the one side and on the other in this great and memorable contest, and that there were likewise evil-disposed and profligate monsters in human shape as well among the supporters of the cause which ulti-

mately triumphed, and which ought to have triumphed, as in the less numerous and less fortunate ranks of its adversaries, no liberal-spirited and enlightened man has ever yet doubted ; and, indeed, to deny the truth of this proposition would be alike unjust to meritorious personages, many of whom now slumber in the grave, and to the hard-won honor of the American people themselves, now, thank Heaven ! once more united by ties of mutual amity and confidence which, I trust, will never be again either burst asunder or seriously enfeebled.

Few can be now so blind as not to perceive that, had this great Republic been permanently dissevered, perpetual border wars would have been inevitable ; that large standing armies would have been organized on either side of the line of territorial separation, and that ultimately—perchance after centuries of anarchy and bloodshed—the complete extinction of republican institutions in this hemisphere and the establishment of several military despotisms in its stead, as grinding and oppressive as the world has known, would have taken place. The bringing of this fearful struggle of arms to a peaceful close, in a manner consistent both with the preservation of the Federal Union and the continued existence of popular freedom, may be therefore justly recognized as a result over which the friends of constitutional liberty throughout the world might be expected to rejoice.

In the summer and autumn of 1864 the absolute necessity of an early peace began to be deeply felt throughout the States of the South. Lee, after a succession of as bloody and destructive battles as any on record, had been driven with his gallant but almost ruined army to the neighborhood of Petersburg, where he was still doing what he could, with his greatly inferior forces, to hold Grant in check and save Richmond from the grasp of this able and enterprising commander. Joe Johnston, for two

months, at the head of one of the most gallant armies that has ever contended for victory upon a field of battle, had been able to retard the advance of Sherman upon Atlanta. How much longer he might have succeeded in doing so had not Jeff Davis, with a most stupid and blundering audacity, removed him, can not now be determined. Hood, who had been substituted for Johnston, after having been signally defeated by Sherman, yielded up Atlanta, retreated toward Newnan, and undertook, under the direction of the enterprising chief of the Confederate cause, his famous and most disastrous Tennessee campaign. Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina all lay now exposed to immediate invasion, and Sherman soon commenced his fearful march toward the sea-shore. It was plain to almost every man in Richmond that whenever General Sherman should advance through the States just mentioned, and reach, in his victorious march, the neighborhood of Richmond, Lee would be compelled to surrender. Such innumerable blunders had been committed under the management of the shallow and egotistical Davis during the immediately preceding twelve months, in the administration, both of civil and military affairs, that only a few individuals, of an over-hopeful temperament, then supposed it possible that the struggle could possibly last beyond the first of the coming May. When General Joseph E. Johnston returned from the South, after having been so unwisely deprived of his command by Mr. Davis, I made it my business to consult him formally in regard to the possibility of continuing the war then in progress, under the disadvantageous circumstances at that time existing. This able and renowned commander spoke with the most perfect frankness upon the subject, and declared that the prolongation of the war would evidently depend upon the rapidity or tardiness of Sherman's movements, and that whenever he should get within the con

fines of Virginia the fall of Richmond must necessarily occur. I asked him whether he at all doubted—now that the army which he had lately commanded was sent, apparently, on an objectless mission to Tennessee—that Sherman would be able to march, almost without interruption, through Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, to the southern boundary of Virginia. He answered promptly that he did not. Then it was that I resolved to make a last desperate effort in the Confederate Congress to obtain the adoption of a resolution asserting the necessity of taking immediate steps toward securing a just and honorable peace. The difficulties which I encountered on this occasion I have already heretofore sufficiently explained.

Several months before this period, having discovered, on reading the Washington newspapers, that the attempt to establish an imperial government in Mexico was awakening great opposition in the two houses of the National Legislature, and that a good deal had been said by several members of that body in support of the celebrated Monroe doctrine, it seemed to me that an opportunity was presented of paving the way to the restoration of amicable relations between the people of the North and those of the South by a formal assertion in the Confederate Congress of the great American principle which constituted the leading feature of that same doctrine. Accordingly I introduced a series of resolutions on this subject, and delivered in support of them a long and zealous speech. These resolutions were referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where they met with most serious opposition from a very unexpected quarter—Mr. William C. Rives, the chairman of the committee, expressing the most decided objection to the proposed movement.

This action on the part of Mr. Rives was the more surprising to me by reason of the fact that he had formerly,

when in the National House of Representatives, been a very warm supporter of the Monroe doctrine. With a view to counteracting his influence I got a copy of the speech which he had delivered on this subject more than twenty years previous, and read several extracts from it in the hearing of the body of which we were both of us then members. I regret to say that this conduct of mine gave this worthy and accomplished gentleman some offense, which I am sure was not at all intended by me. I seize the opportunity of saying here that Mr. Rives, at this period of his life, was in feeble health, seemed to labor under something like habitual depression of spirits, and had to a great extent lost that energy of character for which in earlier life he had been given so much credit. He had evidently ceased to have much confidence in his own mental resources, and, greatly to the astonishment of many, became in a few weeks after he had taken his seat among us a thorough devotee of Mr. Davis and a supporter of nearly all his eccentric and fanciful notions. His principal speech in the House of Representatives was made in support of the proposition to give Mr. Davis unlimited power to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* whenever and wherever he pleased. This veteran statesman was immediately responded to by Colonel Baldwin, of Staunton, in one of the clearest, most manly, and eloquent speeches I ever heard, during the progress of which Mr. Rives evinced a marked restlessness and chagrin which it was really painful to behold. It is but just to this last-named gentleman to state that about the period of the arrival of the well-known Francis P. Blair in Richmond, upon his most humane and patriotic mission of pacification, he began to express himself much more approvingly of the Monroe doctrine. Whether this was owing to Mr. Blair's inspiration or to some other cause I have never been able to learn.

Anterior to my own departure from Richmond in quest of peace, and at the most gloomy and alarming period in the history of the Confederate struggle, one or two incidents occurred which, though perhaps not very important in themselves, it will be proper here to mention. Knowing Mr. Stephens' opposition to several of the leading measures recommended by Mr. Davis, and having good reason to believe that he was beginning to be seriously distrustful as to the result of the war, I visited him one evening for the purpose of holding with him, should he choose to allow it, a full and frank conference. He received me with much civility, and entered into a conversation with me, touching the existing condition of affairs, which I can never forget. He did not hestitate to declare his painful want of confidence in Mr. Davis' capacity, and declared in very emphatic language the apprehension which he began to feel that, unless more statesmanship should be displayed, the war must soon terminate in disappointment and disgrace. I then ventured to suggest to him that, as Mr. Davis and his confidential advisers seemed not to be at all aware of the real dangers of the moment, and were evidently averse to all movements looking to the restoration of peace, there was no possibility of bringing the war to an end unless some man of known character and influence would take upon himself the responsibility of proceeding to Washington for the purpose of ascertaining whether Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet would not be willing to grant terms of reconcilement to the Southern States and people to which they could, without loss of honor, accede. I even went so far on this occasion as to avow to him my conviction that he was himself the man who, above all others, would be most suitable to undertake this dangerous and important embassy, adding that if he could bring back with him a guarantee as to the future such as I was well satisfied

Mr. Lincoln would be willing to give, I did not at all doubt that the States and people of the South would at once desist from the further prosecution of the war, whatever might be the views and wishes of Mr. Davis, who, it was evident, would never consent to any peace which would deprive him of the power and official consequence which he was then enjoying. Though Mr. Stephens did not in terms dissent from the views which I had deemed it my duty to enunciate, yet his caution was such that he did not by any means so far commit himself as to authorize anything like a confident hope that he would himself undertake the high and perilous task to which I had invited him; so I took my leave of this sagacious, upright, and over-fastidious statesman; nor did I see him again until the war was over, when I found him in Washington as a Senator-elect from Georgia, seeking admission to a position which he would doubtless have much adorned had he been once firmly seated as a member of that dignified body, where there are so many and such powerful incentives constantly supplied to the pursuance of a calm, dignified, and truly conservative course.

It was early in the month of January, 1865, that the venerable Francis P. Blair reached the city of Richmond. A man better suited in all respects than this gentleman for the delicate and difficult duty which he had so generously assumed could not well be imagined. He was, and is yet, a person of most active and vigorous intellect; of long and varied public experience, possessing a profound knowledge of human nature, and capable in an eminent degree of adapting himself to the peculiar tempers and tastes of those with whom he may be thrown into contact. He knew Jefferson Davis well, perhaps no man knew him better, and was, of course, cognizant of his extreme selfishness of character, his insatiable ambition, his surpassing vanity, and his extreme tenacity of

power. Mr. Blair hoped that in the then almost ruined condition of Confederate affairs he might find it possible to win Mr. Davis over to the side of peace by opening to him an opportunity of ending the war with credit to himself and his associates, and of taking a conspicuous part in the acquisition of the vast territorial domain then in the lawless occupancy of the imperial autocrat, Maximilian, who had been foisted by the criminal machinations of Louis Napoleon upon a reluctant but powerless people. Had Mr. Blair known at the time how deeply and irretrievably committed Mr. Davis and his especial servitors in Richmond were to the ambitious schemes of the French Emperor, and that our executive chief was himself confidently expecting that the time would yet arrive when Napoleon the Little, Maximilian the Unfortunate, and Jefferson Davis the Equivocator, would, by conjoint and consociated rule, control the destiny of two hemispheres, he would hardly have expected to succeed in his noble and well-planned mission. Mr. Stephens, in the second volume of that very remarkable book which he has lately given to the public, reveals many particulars connected with this epoch, of which, before its appearance, but few had become authentically advised. He says, in relation to the appearance of Mr. Blair in Richmond at the time referred to:

> The arrival of this distinguished personage, who was unquestionably the real *Warwick* of the party then in power at Washington, caused no little sensation. What could have brought him there? and what was his business? These were the inquiries of almost every one. He was immediately in close and private conversation with Mr. Davis. After remaining a few days he returned. Nothing, however, touching the object of his visit escaped from the Executive closet, or got to the public in any way. The surprise occasioned by his first visit was even increased by a second a few days afterward. He was again in consultation with Mr. Davis, and again returned. The same mystery continued to hang over the object of his mission.

Mr. Stephens then goes on to say that it was, "in these

interviews between Mr. Davis and Mr. Blair that the Hampton Roads conference originated." He further states that "on the day after Mr. Blair's final departure he was himself sent for by Mr. Davis, with a request to meet him at a stated hour, on special and important business." This message "came through Mr. Hunter," as Mr. Stephens says, who was doubtless Mr. Davis' sole confidential adviser at this juncture, and who was as much averse as Mr. Davis himself to any pacification with the Government of the United States which should be based upon a frank and loyal submission to the constituted authorities of the Republic. Neither of these gentlemen intended, before they should be forced to do so, to yield up the chimerical and fantastic project of a separate and independent republic, founded upon the absurd and impracticable dogma of secession. Neither of them had the least idea of confessing the grievous political errors which they had been committing, and abandoning the execution of a scheme of separate empire for which they had been both active and insidiously plotting for some twenty years or more. How could they be expected to give their adhesion to the Monroe doctrine, when this would bring the Confederate armies into collision with those of Maximilian and Napoleon, for whose ultimate aid they were confidently looking in the struggle which was then going on with the wise and paternal Government of Washington?

In the interview between Mr. Stephens and Mr. Davis, which afterward occurred, as Mr. Stephens tells us, Mr. Davis made known to him that "Mr. Blair, in a verbal and most confidential manner, had suggested to him a course by which a suspension of hostilities might be effected. This was to be done by a *secret military convention*, between the belligerents, embracing another object, which was the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine, in

the prevention of the establishment of the then projected empire in Mexico by France. Mr. Davis stated that Mr. Blair had given it as his opinion that the result of what he proposed would be the ultimate restoration of the Union, which he greatly desired, and that it was much more in accordance with his wishes that it should be effected in this way than by a continued prosecution of the war to its extreme results."

No one can read Mr. Stephens' account of this interview without coming to the conclusion that Mr. Davis' only object in pursuing the course adopted by him at this juncture was to secure a cessation of hostilities until he could in some way replenish the Confederate armies, and obtain military aid from France, also through Mexico, concerning which there was much talk at the time in Richmond, as well as of obtaining the aid of thirty thousand Poles, for whose co-operation active negotiations had been for some time going on. Whether Mr. Stephens supposed that Mr. Davis was himself sincere in entering into the discussions with Mr. Blair which have been referred to it is difficult at present to determine. But that Mr. Davis, when he agreed to send commissioners to the Hampton Roads meeting, had no idea that any result would be attained beyond the temporary armistice which he so much desired, is made evident by various facts, among which may be mentioned the following: First, the letter of Mr. Davis of the 12th of January, 1865, to Mr. Blair, (which was to be shown to Mr. Lincoln on his return to Washington,) concludes with this remarkable sentence: "Notwithstanding the rejection of our former offers, I would, if you could promise that a commission, minister, or other agent would be received, appoint one immediately, and renew the effort to enter into a conference with a view to secure peace to the two countries."

This is, perhaps, one of the most puerile and contempti-

ble devices ever resorted to, even by this Prince of Managers, in order to delude an honest and confiding Chief Magistrate. Could he have secured a letter or declaration from Mr. Lincoln recognizing the existence of "two countries," instead of one undivided and indivisible Republic, why then he would have obtained for the Confederate Government just such an attitude before the civilized Powers of the world as would have justified him in asking immediate recognition at their hands. To have supposed it possible to entrap two such astute personages as Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward by so clumsy an expedient argues a want of discernment calculated to awaken both pity and contempt. Mr. Lincoln's response to this (addressed also to Mr. Blair) is truly a masterpiece. Here it is:

WASHINGTON, *January*, 1865.

F. P. Blair, Esq.:

SIR: You having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the 12th instant, you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now, and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other person now resisting the national authority may informally send me, with a view of securing peace to our common country.

Second. The second conclusive proof that Mr. Davis was not expecting or desiring peace on the basis of a restoration of the Union is supplied by the characteristic letter of instruction given to the three commissioners dispatched by him to Hampton Roads. It runneth thus:

RICHMOND, *January* 28, 1865.

In conformity with the letter of Mr. Lincoln, of which the foregoing is a copy, you are to proceed to Washington city for an informal conference with him upon the issues involved in the existing war, and for the purpose of securing peace to *the two countries*.

"Still harping on my daughter!" Now, Mr. Davis knew perfectly well when he sent his three commissioners to Hampton Roads that there was no possibility of peace except on the basis of submission to the authority of the Federal Government. He knew that Mr. Lincoln had

put his foot firmly down on that important point. He knew further that were Mr. Lincoln even to violate his oath of office, and abnegate all his antecedent declarations on this subject, it would not be in his power to liberate the people of the South from the obligation of obedience to the Constitution and laws of the Union; and yet did Mr. Davis deliberately tie up the hands of his commissioners in regard to this all vital matter. He gave them no power to treat except upon the basis of Southern independence. It is really wonderful how it happened that two such high-minded and enlightened statesmen as Mr. Stephens and Judge Campbell accepted so humiliating a position at the hands of a cold-blooded and unscrupulous political hypocrite. The conduct of Mr. Hunter was indeed in character. He had been a secessionist of the most extreme type from the days of early manhood. He had foisted Davis upon the Pierce administration with a view to strengthening the secession faction of the South by the bestowal upon them of official patronage. He had never ventured to think for himself in opposition to Mr. Davis from the beginning of the war up to that very moment. He was, indeed, a man of considerable accomplishments, not at all deficient, it must be confessed, in strength of understanding, though without a particle of genius. He was tardy and sluggish in his movements, full of ambition, though without the boldness to sustain his lofty aspirations; selfish, crafty, and contriving beyond any man of his native capacity whom I have known. It is most manifest that he went to Hampton Roads, not to facilitate a just and honorable peace such as Mr. Blair had proposed, but to obstruct it; not to give renewed sanction and binding force to the Monroe doctrine, but to undermine and overthrow it. In other words, he went, as the only one of the peace commissioners enjoying the

full confidence of Mr. Davis, as a "marplot" and a mischief-maker.

All the particulars reported by Mr. Stephens, in his account of the Hampton Roads negotiations, are in perfect accord with the view here presented.

There was one other purpose held in view by Mr. Davis in sending commissioners to Hampton Roads. The people of the Confederate States were getting heartily sick of the war. Alarming movements had taken place in various localities indicating a determination to abandon a scheme of armed opposition to the Government which seemed to promise no earthly benefit to any human being save to Jeff. Davis and his special allies and supporters. Desertions from the Confederate armies were to be counted by thousands and tens of thousands. Resolutions looking to peace had been introduced in Congress by myself and others, which had been advocated with much zeal and eloquence. Davis had himself to pretend that he too desired peace. He had to do more; it had become necessary that he should have it in his power to assert with seeming truth that he had made strenuous efforts for peace, and had found Mr. Lincoln unwilling to grant it except on terms alike ruinous and degrading to the South. He would then have it in his power to "fire the Southern heart" anew, and induce still greater efforts on the part of a generous and heroic people to save themselves and their families from the worst horrors that wait upon war in its most ferocious and destructive character.

I shall not attempt to follow Mr. Stephens' interesting narrative in all its minuter details. It is sufficient to say here that every facility was afforded by General Grant and his subordinates to the Peace Commissioners seeking an interview with Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward at Hampton Roads. They stopped at General Grant's headquarters several days, where he says they were most kindly

treated. "He provided us," says Mr. Stephens, "with comfortable quarters on board of one of his dispatch boats. The more I became acquainted with him the more I became thoroughly impressed with the very extraordinary combination of rare elements of character which he exhibited. During this time he met us frequently, and conversed freely upon various subjects—not much upon our mission. I saw, however, very clearly, that he was very anxious for the proposed conference to take place, and from all that was said I inferred—whether correctly or not I do not know—that he was fully apprised of the proposed object. He was, without doubt, exceedingly anxious for a termination of the war and the return of peace and harmony throughout the country. It was through his instrumentality mainly that Mr. Lincoln finally consented to meet us at Fortress Monroe, as the correspondence referred to shows."

This statement does, indeed, present General Grant to view in a most amiable and interesting light. A more trustworthy witness of his virtues than Mr. Stephens the Republic would be incapable of supplying, and it can not but be gratifying to every true-spirited American patriot that the high personage thus lauded has done nothing since which is not fully in unison with the noble example set by him on this most grave and interesting occasion.

The interview between Messrs. Lincoln and Seward on the one side and the Confederate Peace Commissioners on the other took place "in the saloon of the steamer, on board of which were Mr. Lincoln and Seward, and which lay at anchor at Fortress Monroe." Mr. Stephens continues: "The Commissioners were conducted into the saloon first. Soon after, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward entered." Now commenced the interchange of views, concerning which it is only important now to notice the principal points of discussion.

Upon Mr. Lincoln's being asked the question by Mr. Stephens whether there was "no way of putting an end to present trouble, and bringing about a restoration of general good fee'ing and harmony," he answered "that there was but one way that he knew of, and that was for those who were resisting the laws of the Union to cease that resistance. All the trouble came from an armed resistance against the national authority."

In the further progress of the conversation Mr. Lincoln said that "no arrangement could be made on the line suggested by Mr. Blair without a previous assurance that the Union was to be ultimately restored; in other words, that the armistice desired would be granted, and a compact be entered into by both parties for the maintenance of the Monroe policy, provided a "previous pledge" should be given "that the Union was to be ultimately restored."

Upon Mr. Stephens urging that a suspension of hostilities should take place with a view to the enforcement of the Monroe policy, without any previous pledge of the ultimate restoration of the Union, trusting to the probability existing that such a result might, in the process of time, be attained, Mr. Lincoln replied "with considerable earnestness that he could entertain no proposition for ceasing active military operations which was not based upon a pledge first given for the ultimate restoration of the Union. He had considered the question of an armistice fully, and could not give his consent to any proposition of that sort on the basis suggested. The settlement of our existing difficulties was a question now of supreme importance, and the only basis on which he would entertain a proposition for a settlement was the recognition and re-establishment of the national authority throughout the land."

After a good deal of general discussion between Mr.

Stephens and Mr. Seward, in which I do not perceive any new ideas to have been advanced on either side, and after some little allusion to the *modus operandi* of an armistice, in case one should be agreed upon, Mr. Hunter seems to have considered that the time had come for him to throw a little cold water upon the idea of co-operation for the enforcement of the Monroe doctrine, and Mr. Stephens reports him accordingly as saying that "there was not unanimity in the South upon the subject of undertaking the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine, and it was not probable that any arrangement could be made by which the Confederates would agree to send any portion of their army into Mexico."

Mr. Stephens tells us that "Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward stated that the feeling in the North was very strong for maintaining the Monroe doctrine." I undertake now to say very deliberately that there never was a time when the people of the South would not have been ready to arm almost unanimously in support of the great American principle embodied therein, Mr. Davis and Mr. Hunter to the contrary notwithstanding.

It was several times during this interview very emphatically declared by Mr. Lincoln that the Southern States and people could obtain peace "by disbanding their armies and permitting the National authorities to resume their functions."

Mr. Seward declared on this occasion that if the Confederate armies were disbanded, "as to all questions involving rights of property the courts would determine, and that Congress would, no doubt, be liberal in making restitution of confiscated property, or providing indemnity after the excitement of the times had passed off."

Mr. Stephens says: "I asked Mr. Lincoln what would be the *status* of the slave population in the Confederate States which had not then become free under his procla-

mation ; or, in other words, what effect that proclamation would have upon the entire black population ? Would it be held to emancipate the whole, or only those who had at the time the war ended become actually free under it ?

" Mr. Lincoln said that was a judicial question. How the courts would decide it he did not know and could give no answer. His own opinion was that as the proclamation was a *war measure*, and would have effect only from its being an exercise of the war power, as soon as the war ceased it would be inoperative for the future. It would be held to apply only to such slaves as had come under its operation while it was in active exercise. * *

" Mr. Seward said there were only about two hundred thousand slaves who, up to that time, had come under the actual operation of the proclamation, and who were then in the enjoyment of freedom under it ; so if the war should then cease the *status* of much the larger portion of the States would be subject to judicial construction. Mr. Lincoln sustained Mr. Seward as to the number of slaves who were then in the actual enjoyment of their freedom under the proclamation."

Mr. Seward likewise produced a copy of what is now so well known as the thirteenth Constitutional amendment, adopted by Congress a day or two before this interview, which he significantly suggested, being a war measure, should the war then cease, might not be adopted by a sufficient number of States to make it a part of the Constitution.

Mr. Lincoln, according to Mr. Stephens' statement, expressed the opinion that all the States of the South then engaged in war would, should the war cease at once, be immediately taken back into the Union upon their original footing.

Toward the close of this remarkable scene Mr. Hunter interposed, and avowed the opinion that, should the South

submit to such terms as were now proposed, it would amount to "nothing but an unconditional surrender." To this Mr. Seward promptly responded, says Mr. Stephens, by "insisting that no words like unconditional surrender had been used, or any importing, or justly implying degradation, or humiliation even, of the Confederate States. He wished this to be borne in mind." Mr. Hunter repeated his view of the subject and asserted that "unconditional submission was demanded of the Southern States to the mercy of the conquerors."

"Mr. Seward replied that they were not conquerors further than that they required submission to the laws," and afterward added, that "the Southern people and the Southern States would be under the Constitution of the United States, with all their rights secured thereby in the same way, and through the same instrumentalities as the similar rights of other States were.

"Mr. Hunter said: But you make no agreement that these rights will be so held and secured.

"Mr. Lincoln said that so far as the confiscation acts and other penal acts were concerned, their enforcement was left entirely with him, and on that point he was perfectly willing to be free and explicit, and on his assurance perfect reliance might be placed. He should exercise the power of the Executive with the utmost liberality. He went on to say that he would be willing to be taxed to remunerate the Southern people for their slaves. He believed the people of the North were as responsible for slavery as the people of the South, and if the war should then cease, with the voluntary abolition of slavery by the States, he should be in favor individually of the Government paying a fair indemnity for the loss to the owners. He said he believed this feeling had an extensive existence at the North. He knew some who were in favor of

an appropriation as high as four hundred millions of dollars for this purpose."

* * * * * *

"Mr. Seward said that the people of the North were weary of the war. They desired peace and a restoration of harmony, and he believed they would be willing to pay as an indemnity for the slaves what would be required to conduct the war, but named no amount."

Just before the conference came to a close Mr. Stephens, as he states, urged upon Mr. Lincoln the propriety of reconsidering the subject of an armistice; which he promised to do.

On the arrival of the commissioners at Richmond they reported all these particulars, and much more besides of the same tenor, to Mr. Davis; in the face of which he had the unparalleled audacity to send a special message to the Confederate Congress, declaring in terms that "the enemy refused to enter into negotiations with the Confederate States, or any one of them separately, or to give to our people any other terms or guarantees than those which a conqueror may grant, or to permit us to have peace on any other basis than our unconditional submission to their rule," &c. He also convoked a public meeting in the African Church at Richmond, to which meeting he addressed one of his characteristic specimens of rhodomontade, and, by the most shameless false statements as to all that had occurred between Mr. Lincoln and his commissioners at Hampton Roads, procured the adoption of resolutions pledging the people of the South to a further prosecution of hostilities, which resolutions would never have received the popular approval in any nook or corner of the South upon a full knowledge of all the extraordinary facts which Mr. Stephens has himself set forth in the book, from the pages of which I have been quoting so freely. No doubt can be now left upon the

mind of any one that, by pursuing the course which has been described, Messrs. Davis, Hunter, and Benjamin, the chief actors in this abominable scene of falsehood and cruel deception, made themselves responsible for all the innocent blood afterward shed in this terrible war, for all the discredit connected with the formal military surrenders to which Generals Lee, Joe Johnston, Kirby Smith, and others were compelled to submit, and to all the evils of every kind of which the unfortunate South has had such bitter experience in the last eight years. With these extraordinary particulars now presented to the consideration of an impartial public, who will blame me for urging a cessation of hostilities on the part of the Confederate States and people in the winter of 1864-'5, and a prompt submission to the Constitution and laws of the land?

Will any portion of the Southern people ever again consent to trust their dearest rights and interests in the hands of the men who have thus so cruelly and unpardonably betrayed them?

REMINISCENCE No. XXX.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN—THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS—A RESUME OF THE FACTS—WHERE THE BLAME BELONGS.

No one, I am persuaded, can take a fair and candid view of the important conference at Hampton Roads between Mr. Lincoln and the commissioners sent by Mr. Davis to hold intercourse with him touching the grave and delicate matters discussed on that occasion, and avoid being deeply impressed with the moderation and forbearance manifested by that eminent personage, who was destined in a few weeks to fall a victim to lawless and unprovoked violence, nor can such an one fail to be pleased also with the manly and amiable commiseration manifested by him for the sufferings of his unfortunate brethren of the South. His whole demeanor throughout this memorable scene was courteous, urbane, and affectionate. He uttered not a word which could give reasonable offense to the proudest and most morbidly sensitive man to whom the sunny regions so ably represented before him had ever given birth. He stated terms of settlement which, had they been accepted, would at once have brought back all the States then in insurrection to their original footing as compeers and co-ordinate members of that sublime assemblage of free and happy Commonwealths, from whose communion they had so causelessly departed. All *confiscations* were to be set aside or indemnified; all other penalties which had been incurred were to be remitted. The number of slaves set free by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation, as was satisfactorily shown, would not probably amount to more than the number of two hundred thousand, and the slaveholders of the South

were presently to receive as much as four hundred millions of dollars in exchange for property now become almost absolutely valueless, provided their own good sense and philanthropic feelings should prompt them *voluntarily* to release from bondage all the remainder of those yet pining in servitude. And these liberal terms were offered by those whose influence was such as to give the fullest assurance that whatever stipulations they might enter into would be promptly and fairly carried into operation, and tendered, too, be it remembered, to those who had not the least reason to hope that they could remain unconquered even for sixty days longer. There is scarcely another such instance of magnanimity as this to be found anywhere recorded in history. Mr. Lincoln on this occasion did everything that he could possibly do to avert the evils which he saw were about to fall upon his unhappy fellow-citizens of the South, except uniting with them in the subversion of that Union which he had solemnly sworn to support.

When, a few weeks after, he was in the city of Richmond, at a time subsequent to the memorable surrender of Lee, his conduct was so benignant and compassionate as to provoke the criminatory complaints of him who was soon to be his successor, and whose whole soul was now most unhappily on fire to "make treason odious."

Nobody can at this time doubt that if President Lincoln had been permitted to live long enough he would have granted universal pardon to those of the South who had been engaged in this most deplorable war; he would have done what he could, in addition, to heal all the wounds which the war had inflicted, with a view to the restoration of that general prosperity and happiness which had been in days past so richly enjoyed. Mr. Lincoln seems, indeed, to have been a man of most kindly and sympathizing temper, free from all groveling selfishness,

not at all addicted to the degrading arts of demagogism, and devoted most intensely to his country and his whole country. He was doubtless familiar with all the most shining examples of clemency and magnanimity which have at different periods adorned the annals of civilized nations, alike of ancient and of modern times, and he recoiled instinctively from all that could seriously involve his own personal dignity or compromise the honor of the great nation of which he was the chosen chief. Never could he have consented to do an act of wanton cruelty or to trifle with the sensibilities of any class of his countrymen. Had he been once fairly placed in the situation afterward occupied by his immediate successor he would assuredly have given to the world the fullest evidence that he cordially concurred in all that has been so nobly expressed by the immortal bard of Avon when he said:

> The quality of *mercy* is not *strained;*
> It falleth like the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the earth beneath; it is twice blessed;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
> 'Tis mightiest in the mighty; it becomes
> The throned monarch better that his crown;
> The scepter shows the force of temporal power;
> The attribute to awe and majesty.
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
> But *mercy* is above this sceptered sway;
> It is enthroned in the *heart* of kings;
> It is an attribute to God Himself.
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When *mercy* seasons *justice.*

That such a person as this should have been so cruelly thwarted as he was fated to be (by the extraordinary course adopted by Mr. Davis and his political advisers) in the execution of his generous purposes toward the States and people of the South is one of the most melancholy instances of political fatuity that have ever occurred: and no means of expiation are now left to those who com-

mitted this grievous malefaction by which the criminality of these men can be fully atoned for. Had Mr. Davis dared to let the people of the South know what terms of pacification Mr. Lincoln had really offered to them, twenty days could not possibly have elapsed ere their own good sense and their yet unextinguished love of country would have forced the civil agents whom they had chosen to administer their affairs, and who had shamefully misrepresented them, to make peace at once upon the generous conditions propounded. Could the Confederate Congress in some way have become apprised of the true state of things then existing, they would certainly have impeached and deposed Mr. Davis for daring to expose so recklessly the people whom they represented to the multiplied evils which they could not but perceive would very soon come upon them.

By every constitution of government in this country the pardoning power is recognized as the chief attribute of the Executive Department, and it is in the honest and manly exercise of this power that more true glory is to be acquired than in any other mode that can be specified. The executive chief who formally abnegates this high attribute of sovereignty—who fails to put it in exercise on all suitable occasions, or who signally abuses it in any way, may be justly denounced as a monstrous offender against the dignity and welfare of the community. The legislative department of such a government as ours which obstinately refuses for an over-long period of time to restore such of its citizens as may have rebelled against its authority, but who, afterward, in a seasonable manner, shall have voluntarily placed themselves under the control of the violated law, can not but be held seriously reprehensible;—though this unhappy state of things has, in point of fact, repeatedly occurred heretofore on both sides of the Atlantic.

The experience of our country as to this deeply interesting matter has been both fortunate and unfortunate, creditable and discreditable. In regard to the exercise of the pardoning power, all our Chief Magistrates up to the accidental elevation to the Presidential dignity of Andrew Johnson have seemed to entertain exceedingly correct views touching the true nature and use of this exalted prerogative. This personage seemed to understand that the pardoning power was to be employed by him simply as a means of conciliating persons of known influence, and of securing the increase of his own individual popularity. His first grand experiment in its exercise was the calling to Washington from the South as many of its citizens as owned twenty thousand dollars' worth of property, by pardoning whom he hoped ultimately to control the political action of the whole mass of the humbler inhabitants of that region. Though he had it in his power, through the wise provision of Congress, to issue a general proclamation of amnesty to those lately found in a state of rebellion, he ungraciously declined to do so, and even made no attempt whatever in this direction until Congress at last came to the conclusion that he was an unsafe depository of this grand attribute.

The Congress of the United States has itself initiated the good work of governmental clemency, and a legislative enactment has been signed by an upright and truly humane President, which has diffused a sentiment of gladness and gratitude throughout the whole land. There is no instance in all history of a more sage and magnanimous exercise of the pardoning power than this, and already the good effects resulting therefrom are beginning to display themselves in every part of the Republic. We shall, indeed, soon be *one people* in *sentiment*, *opinion*, and *interest*, as we were when the foundations of our noble Government were laid. The policy of forgive-

ness and reconcilement will doubtless in a month or two more be made *universal*, as it ought to be, so as even to embrace certain classes not even yet *reconstructed* in temper, in thought, and demeanor. This great Government can afford even to shower its benignity upon the discontented, the factious, and the complaining, as God sends His rains upon the just and the unjust. Its own unsullied honor requires that it should do so. The sublime work of *national pacification*, I am confident, will not be done by the American Congress by halves, or in a stinting and parsimonious manner. The coming Congress will advance heroically up to the thrice-glorious duty which lies before them for performance, and then indeed shall we have peace and amity and affectionate brotherhood throughout this broad and Heaven-blessed continent. And when this state of things shall have been once fully realized, should it become needful to call into practical exercise the long-cherished Monroe doctrine, either upon *terra firma* or amid the beauteous and attractive islands which so providentially shut in our own *Mare Clausum* to the south, we shall behold a spectacle which, in true glory, will eclipse all that the world's history has heretofore depictured. I do not at all doubt that there are men now living who will see the sacred emblem of American freedom and power borne onward and aloft over the whole extent of North America, carrying with it everywhere, over the land and over the circumambient seas, the majestic charter of our liberties, even in its present amplified and amended form, and, through its sublime instrumentality, giving protection, encouragement, and constantly increasing hope of the highest social and moral advancement to all who may be so fortunate as to be located under its auspicious and ennobling influence.

I hope to be excused for here citing what I ventured to say in a letter to Mr. Lincoln in the year 1865, and which

has been long since printed, every word of which will be found in unison with what I have on this occasion enunciated. I then said, and I am not ashamed of having then said, honestly, and for the great purpose which I had at that time in view, what follows:

I have, in the course of the present correspondence, once or twice incidentally alluded to the celebrated Monroe doctrine as presenting alike to the States of the North and those of the South a means of cordial reconcilement and of future prosperity and strength. Let me say here, in addition, that I deem it one of the most fortunate circumstances which could be possibly imagined that such an opportunity of doing away forever with sectional distrust and animosity, and of *consolidating the National Union*, should have been thus seasonably afforded, as this same Monroe doctrine has so remarkably supplied. Just recollect, if you please, that the favorite idea of all the venerated fathers of American liberty, in the earlier days of the Republic, was that the moral ascendency as well as physical domination of the Anglo-American race, their peculiar institutions of government, and their social morals, were to be ultimately coextensive with the great continent itself where it is our fortune to be located. Bear in mind also that it is essential to the progress of liberal sentiment in this hemisphere, the healthful and beneficial advancement of science, and all the useful and elevating arts of civilized existence, that a cordial *consociation* and *cooperation* of energies of every kind should be in some way effectually secured, with a view to the attainment of the great end in contemplation; and I can not at all doubt that you will fully agree with me in the opinion that it is indeed the voice of true wisdom and of enlightened patriotism also, which invokes, which entreats you, with an earnestness not known to the selfish votaries of faction, to seize at once the golden opportunity which an all-bounteous Providence has so fortunately presented to you of becoming not only the restorer of your country's happiness, but the vindicator also of the principles of civil and religious freedom in our own favored hemisphere.

Doubt not, I pray you, that the chivalrous sons of the South will, if justly and liberally treated in this the day of their sore travail and suffering, second you in all your exertions to maintain the Monroe doctrine in all its primeval scope and vigor. They know the history of that doctrine well, and it stands associated with many of their proudest and most inspiring recollections. They remember that though in *theory* originating in the generous bosom and expanded and far-reaching intellect of a renowned British statesman, the lamented George

Canning,* (sustained, if my memory serve me faithfully, in this the most glorious movement of his public life, by such men as a Brougham and a McIntosh,) yet that it is alike true that from the year 1823 up to the breaking out of the present unhappy war in 1861, every administration of the Government of which you are now the chief executive

* Those who have made themselves familiar with the parliamentary life of Mr. Canning will not regard me as at all overstating his conduct on this important subject. Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates" show that this truly upright and courageous British statesman not only acted the part attributed to him above, but that he, more than once, on very striking occasions, warmly felicitated himself upon having done so. His memorable declaration in Parliament, that he had called into existence new States in the Western hemisphere, "in order to redress the balance of power disturbed in the East," is of course remembered by all the admirers of this great master of speech. It is, perhaps, not known to all that, as early as the month of August, 1823, Mr Canning, in an interview with Mr. Rush, the American Minister near the Court of St. James at that period, urged that the United States should unite with Great Britain in a formal declaration against any of the continental Powers of Europe being allowed to take possession of any portion of the territory of the American continent then recently rescued from Spain. Referring to the designs suspected at that time to be entertained by France in particular, he stated to Mr. Rush that he "was satisfied that the knowledge that the United States would be opposed to it as well as England could not fail to have a decisive influence in checking it." In a letter to Mr. Rush, written a few days after this noted interview, he said, referring to the apprehended transfer of Mexico to France, that Great Britain, while unwilling to interfere with any efforts on the part of Spain to repossess herself of her ancient colonial possessions, "could not see the transfer of any portion to any other Power with indifference." In several other letters this view of the subject was earnestly presented by Mr. Canning to Mr. Rush, who was at last persuaded to concur with him, and to bring the subject, as he did in a very forcible manner, to the consideration of Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet. The promulgation of what is known as "the Monroe doctrine" was the result. Mr. Monroe, in a message to Congress, expressed himself as follows: "With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered and shall not interfere; but with the governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States." Referring to this very message, Lord Brougham, then a member of the House of Commons, said: "The question with regard to South America now was, he believed, disposed of, or nearly so; for an event had recently happened, than which no event had ever dispersed greater joy, exultation, and gratitude over all the free men of Europe; that event, which was decisive on the subject, was the language held with respect to Spanish America in the speech or message of the President of the United States to Congress." Sir James McIntosh, in one of his noblest speeches, alluding to the same message of Mr. Monroe, said: "This wise Government, in grave but determined language, and with that reasonable but deliberate tone that becomes true courage, proclaims the principles of her policy, and makes known the cases in which the care of her own safety will compel her to take up arms for the defense of other States. I have already observed its coincidence with the declarations of England, which, indeed, is perfect, if allowance be made for the deeper, or at least more immediate interest in the independence of South America which near neighborhood gives to the United States. This coincidence of the two great English commonwealths (for so I delight to call them, and I heartily pray that they may be forever united in the cause of justice and liberty) can not be contemplated without the utmost pleasure by every enlightened citizen of the earth." It is a very clear proposition that, if the Great Britain of to-day is the Great Britain of Mr. Canning's time, (and who can doubt it?) that this same Monroe doctrine may yet become the nucleus of union and manly, efficient, co-operative energy among all who speak the English language in both hemispheres, and who cherish a true regard for the free institutions derived from a common ancestry. So mote it be!—H. S. F.

functionary has uniformly asserted and maintained this *magna charta* of the Western hemisphere with a steady firmness and with undiminished zeal. John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, Lewis Cass, Millard Fillmore, James Buchanan, President Pierce, and Edward Everett, of the North ; James Monroe, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, William H. Crawford, Andrew Jackson, John Tyler, and James K. Polk, of the South, at different periods and in different modes, are well known to have signalized their devotion to the great American principle embodied in the far-famed Monroe doctrine ; and it is a little too late now to expect any considerable portion of the descendants of those great men, some of whom have gone down to the grave with so much honor, to relinquish those muniments of national safety and freedom which have been thus far so nobly maintained.

I venture to predict, Mr. President, that if such just and gracious treatment shall be now accorded to the South as her people have a clear right to demand in the adjustment of the terms upon which peace and union shall be once more restored, this same Monroe doctrine is destined shortly to become the effectual healer of *sectional distemperatures*— the sovereign uniter of hearts which should never have been divided— the veritable Macedonian sword itself, which, skillfully wielded, will yet be seen to cut asunder that Gordian knot of discord which has heretofore so fearfully puzzled and perplexed even the most gifted of our statesmen.

REMINISCENCE No. XXXI.

THOMAS H. BENTON—GENERAL TAYLOR—JOHN M. CLAYTON—MEXICAN TREATY—COLONEL FREMONT.

I do not feel that these reminiscences would have any claim to be recognized as complete were I to exclude therefrom all notice of the very remarkable man upon whose life and character I propose at this time to offer a few observations.

Thomas H. Benton was born in the State of North Carolina. He was of respectable origin, and stood connected with many families, both in his native State and elsewhere, of very creditable standing. The course of his education at college was disagreeably interrupted by a very sad occurrence, upon which I shall not here expatiate, but in reference to which I once felt bound to make very distinct allusions in the United States Senate, in presence of Mr. Benton himself. On leaving North Carolina, before he was yet entirely grown, Colonel Benton located in the State of Tennessee, and taught school upon the classic Duck river for a year or two; during which time he is reported to have been a diligent student of law, and a general reader of books calculated to improve his intellect and fit him for the career which he expected soon to run. As a lawyer he located, more than sixty years ago, in the respectable village of Franklin, the county seat of Williamson county, and about twenty miles from Nashville. The small brick tenement which he occupied as a professional office is still pointed out by the good citizens of Franklin to those at all curious in relation to the early incidents in Colonel Benton's bustling

and variegated life. He represented for a year or two the rich and intelligent county of Williamson in the Senate of Tennessee; but I do not learn that at this stage of his career he gave evidence of any remarkable ability either as a lawyer or as a legislator. During the war of 1812–1815, he, from various causes, became known quite extensively, and his celebrated conflict with General Jackson in the streets of Nashville imparted to him a celebrity not easy to be extinguished. A year or two after this he attracted some attention in Missouri as the editor of a newspaper, and an active and influential political partisan. In relation to his bitter personal quarrels in Missouri at this period I have nothing to say, as I did not then know him personally. He took his seat in the Congress of the United States as one of the first Senators from Missouri on the admission of that State, more than a half century ago. For several years he attained no considerable prominence as a Senator, but this period seems to have been occupied by him in a close and unremitting study of the volumes of science and of general literature. I formed my first personal acquaintance with him about the year 1837, but had been a very close observer of his public acts and speeches for a good while before. I had in general agreed with him upon the public questions then under discussion, but I had never read his speeches with much gratification, nor was I an admirer of his imperious, self-important manner in debate, or of his coarse and ferocious dogmatism. On meeting him face to face my first unfavorable impressions of him were greatly strengthened, and the excessive vanity and egotism constantly displayed by him, both in conversational scenes and in the Senate, inspired me with feelings of disgust and aversion which I have seldom experienced. Several well-known occurrences had taken place before my entrance into the Senate in December, 1847, which had

awakened in my mind certain sentiments toward Mr. Benton, bordering, I must confess, upon feelings of positive dislike and detestation, among which I may mention his fierce collision with my friend, Robert J. Walker, in the winter of 1836–'37, upon the currency question then pending; his bitter denunciations of Mr. Calhoun and others for whom I cherished at that time a tender and profound regard, and his habitually overbearing demeanor in the Senate toward all, even of his own party, who did not slavishly submit to his authority. His aspirations to the office of Lieutenant General during the Mexican war, the arts which he practiced to obtain this appointment, and his subsequent hostility to Mr. Polk because of his unwillingness to send him to Mexico to take command of our noble army there—by the unjust and ungenerous supersession of that gallant and patriotic officer, General Winfield Scott—established in my mind sentiments of solid and irremovable opposition to Colonel Benton such as I have seldom felt for any public man whatever.

I do not deem it proper to refer to the almost numberless scenes which afterward had their progress in the Senate, in which I felt called upon to resist Mr. Benton's tyrannic insolence of demeanor, or to defend against his unjust and cruel assailment some of the most worthy and unoffending citizens I have ever known—the bare mention of whose names would be sufficient with all who knew them to justify me in the estimation of all just-minded and patriotic citizens for coming forward as their zealous defender. I prefer passing all this by, and coming to matters of still higher dignity. *Paulo majora canamus!*

One morning a gentleman of remarkable astuteness and penetration, who had been a short time before a member of Congress, and who, I am glad to know, is still living, called upon me at my committee-room in the Capitol, and

laid before me facts showing very conclusively that Colonel Benton was then in collusion with the Mexican Minister at that time resident in Washington for the purpose of procuring, if he could, the *rescission* of the important treaty then recently entered into with Mexico by means of which vast territories had been acquired of almost incalculable value. I learned from the individual referred to that Mr. Benton and the Mexican Minister were constantly interchanging visits, and that official letters signed by the Mexican Ministers had been received at the Department of State, where Mr. Buchanan was then officiating, urging with singular ingenuity and force that the important treaty alluded to was of no earthly validity whatever, by reason of the fact that a certain paper, somewhat loosely called a *protocol*, which had been signed by the ministers of the United States who had previously negotiated the treaty, after the date of that instrument, was so palpably repugnant to the provisions thereof as necessarily, should it be allowed to have effect, to operate its abrogation. I was further advised that Mr. Benton would very soon propound this important matter in the Senate while that body should be in executive session, and would offer a resolution for adoption correspondent with the views set forth in the letters of the Mexican Minister to the Secretary of State, which have been already mentioned. This extraordinary disclosure, fortified, as I saw it to be, by various surrounding circumstances, awakened in my bosom mingled feelings of indignation and alarm. Great national interests seemed to be in the most serious jeopardy. Mr. Benton's peculiar position at the time (that gentleman not having then lost all his power and influence in the Senate and with the Democratic party, and having done much of late, as I bore in mind, of a nature to soften down and conciliate his former party adversaries, the Whigs) furnished, as I thought at

the time, and as I do yet think, ground for the greatest solicitude and anxiety. After consulting with several considerate friends—recollecting that noted test to which Hamlet is described as subjecting his usurping uncle, by having presented to his view an extemporized dramatic entertainment fitted to develop aught of "rottenness," which might be perchance lurking "in the State of Denmark"—I delivered one morning in the Senate a short but very animated address, (which may be yet found in the *Congressional Globe* of that period,) accompanying the enunciation of the same, as far as it was in my power to do so, with significant glances and gestures, so as at least to adumbrate to any guilty conscience which might be in presence the painful and harrowing suspicions which I had conceived, and even to "probe it" also, if possible, "to the very quick." This address, which six or eight surviving Senators do doubtless well recollect, concluded with that well-known couplet of Pope:

> Who would not *smile*, if such a man there be?
> Who would not blush, if *Atticus* were he?

Whether there was real *blenching* in the distrusted quarter I shall leave to those then present to decide. I was, I confess, very desirous that the experienced Senator from Missouri should desist from his scheme of territorial spoliation, could he be induced to do so either by his own fears of personal disgrace, or by the persuasions of his friends; and I awaited the result with patience, though certainly not without carrying forward diligently the scrutiny which I had already commenced. In a day or two after this Mr. Polk ceased to be President, and General Taylor became domiciliated at the White House.

Having unlimited confidence in that pure and fervent love of country which I knew to glow in the bosom of this war-worn veteran, and entertaining a warm personal esteem for the members of his Cabinet, I resolved to make

an early appeal to those then in power to aid, with whatever of influence they possessed, in defeating any proposition which Mr. Benton might bring forward in the Senate looking to the doing away of the Mexican treaty. Before this intention could be fully executed two Senators from the State of Iowa, Messrs. Dodge and Jones, (both of whom are yet living,) came to me at the Capitol, directly from an interview with Mr. Buchanan, and bearing to me a message from that gentleman, requesting me to come to see him immediately, for the purpose of learning from his own lips all the particulars connected with the correspondence which had several weeks before taken place between himself, as Secretary of State under Mr. Polk, and the Mexican Minister. I should here mention that Mr. Buchanan yet occupied the State Department, having been requested by General Taylor to continue therein until it should become convenient for Mr. Clayton, then elsewhere much occupied, to relieve him. I will here mention an additional fact, which I could not consider altogether immaterial. The two Senators who had thus summoned me to the presence of Mr. Buchanan had been up to that time (and possibly may be yet) warm admirers of Mr. Benton, and had frankly declared in this very interview with me that they had before that time been often disposed to find fault with what they deemed my own over-censorious course toward him. The interview thus solicited by Mr. Buchanan did in point of fact take place, but barely in time to prevent mischievous consequences in the Senate. The adroit and skillful engineer had already commenced his work in that body with all the artistic skill which his great parliamentary experience could supply, and it had now become an exceedingly interesting question whether this same engineer could or could not be "hoist on his own petard." Mr. Buchanan gave me his views in full upon the question raised by Mr. Benton

in the Senate, and he explained all the circumstances connected with the "protocol," just as I heard them from the lips of that able and incorruptible officer, Judge Clifford, in an interview I had with him about three months since, and who knows better than any one else all the facts of the case by reason of his having been one of the Ministers to Mexico already referred to. Mr. Buchanan further gave me assurance that he had good reason to believe that General Taylor and his Cabinet entertained in regard to the protocol the same views that he did, and that they would sustain the position heretofore taken on the subject by the Administration of Mr. Polk. He suggested, also, that he and I should visit the White House on the morning anterior to the meeting of the Senate, (then in special session,) and before Mr. Benton's resolution could be acted upon, and procure, if we could, something like a formal official declaration from President Taylor himself, or his expected Premier, Mr. Clayton, which, when shown to the Whig members of the Senate, would open their eyes to the dangers of the moment, and advise them fully of the views and wishes of the existing Administration. Early on the following morning, therefore, before yet the hour of 10 o'clock had arrived, Mr. Buchanan and myself were on our way to the Presidential Mansion. Just as the carriage which was conveying us thither reached a point opposite the Department of State, Colonel J. Watson Webb, former editor of the New York *Courier and Enquirer*, made his appearance, told us that he knew what was taking us to the presence of General Taylor, and asked to be allowed to accompany us thither upon our patriotic mission. To this we cheerfully acceded, and all three of us proceeded without delay to our place of destination. On reaching the White House we learned that the Cabinet was then in session. We sent our names to Mr. Clayton, and asked for an immediate

interview, which having been accorded us we laid the matter so near our hearts before this courteous and accomplished personage. His conduct on the occasion was most manly and becoming. He told us that the subject of the treaty and protocol had been considered fully by the President and his Cabinet; that they could see no repugnance between these two documents, and that they would certainly maintain the position heretofore taken in regard to this matter by the administration of Mr. Polk. Mr. Clayton also said, emphatically, that he had thoroughly examined the official correspondence which had been held between Mr. Buchanan and the Mexican Minister, and that he was prepared to indorse every line and sentence which his predecessor, Mr. Buchanan, had heretofore addressed to the latter personage touching this grave and interesting affair. After this manly and patriotic assurance had been given, I asked Mr. Clayton to embody, or cause to be embodied, in a short resolution or statement, the views just expressed by him, which he did accordingly; that is to say, he dictated it to one of our company, who took the same down in pencil marks, from Mr. Clayton's own lips on the spot. This resolution I took with me to the Senate, and laid it before several Whig members of that body, who declared their warm approval of the same. To make "assurance double sure" as to a concern so important, Reverdy Johnson, the then Attorney General—as able and patriotic a man as is now living—was requested by General Taylor to go to the Senate and declare to the Whig members there the action which had been had at the White House; so, some time before Mr. Benton had closed his prosy and labored speech in support of his own *nullifying* resolution, it was well known to all but himself what the result would be. When he brought his remarks to a close and sent his resolution to the Clerk's desk, I rose and spoke in reply for about an hour in lan-

guage of great explicitness, in which I inveighed as strongly as I could against Mr. Benton's movement, denounced it as alike unpatriotic and mischievous, and pointed out the unworthy personal motives by which he was evidently influenced. After this his resolution was voted down unanimously, with the exception, indeed, of his own vote, and he left the hall full of anger and chagrin.)

It will surprise no one now, I presume, to learn that I considered myself justified by such facts as I have been relating, and which all the members of the Senate now surviving would be doubtless ready to attest, in doing what I could legitimately and fairly to weaken Mr. Benton's influence in the country, and to circumscribe his capacity for mischief. Hence my assailment of him in the newspapers in the summer of 1849, and other acts, needless now to be mentioned, indicating my opinion of his character and the danger which I apprehended from his being intrusted with too large an amount of civic power. I determined to deal him in addition a decisive blow, which, should the Democratic members of the Senate prove as mindful of the honor of the country, as well as of their own individual dignity, as I hoped they would, could not but be fatal to Mr. Benton's hopes of ascendency in the future. On the first day of the approaching session of Congress I entered the Democratic caucus which had been convoked for that day, and moved that Thomas H. Benton, upon charges which I was prepared to array against him, should be discontinued as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, well knowing that if this movement should be successful in caucus, the Democratic party having a decided majority in the Senate, Mr. Benton would be inevitably ousted from the high position referred to, and that William R. King, of Alabama, would be chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in his

stead, which motion, after two mornings spent in its discussion, was carried by one vote; soon after which Mr. Benton resigned his membership of the committee.

Mr. Benton was certainly a man of considerable native strength of intellect, and of a most capacious and retentive memory. He possessed much knowledge of various kinds, and as a writer of pure and nervous English had but few equals. He was exceedingly deficient in extemporaneous oratorical power, had a bad voice, a forbidding and unconciliatory manner—showed but little respect for the feelings of those whom he met in debate, and as a politician was little regardful of the means which he employed for the attainment of his ends. He never spoke in the Senate except upon the most labored preparation, and then always from copious notes, and his principal speeches were always fully written out before their delivery.

A scene occurred in the Senate between Mr. Benton and myself which I should here briefly explain. In the summer of 1850, while Mr. Calhoun's remains were being transported from Washington to South Carolina, but before they had left Washington, Mr. Benton rose up one morning and made, as I understood them, some very disrespectful allusions to the illustrious deceased. I stepped to the chair of Mr. Butler, Mr. Calhoun's own Senatorial colleague, and urged him to say something in response. He seemed not exactly to understand the import of Mr. Benton's words, and therefore responded to him in a very confused and ineffective manner. I rose up to subjoin one or two observations in a style, as I am willing to acknowledge, not a little animated and indignant. Mr. Benton got up suddenly from his chair, which was some distance from mine, making at the time a prodigious noise, and advanced rapidly in the direction of my position, which was on the outer circle of seats, not far from the central door of the chamber, and seemed to be aiming to get

behind me whilst I was speaking, in order to strike me when in this unprotected attitude. I had been warned by Senator Pratt only a day or two before that he had publicly threatened to do me violence in the Senate if I ever undertook to allude to him again, and I had deemed it expedient to put on arms for my own defense. I was wearing at the moment a Colt's revolver, which I certainly intended to use should it become necessary. On drawing it, I took a step or two to the right, which carried me to the central aisle of the Senate. I then turned toward the central door of the chamber, intending certainly if Mr. Benton should pass the corner near my seat and advance a single step down the aisle I was standing in, after having warned him of my intention, to fire upon him at once, conceiving that in shooting in the direction of the central door I should be able to avoid doing injury to any one else; for I undoubtedly did not intend to succumb to his violence while in the decorous performance of my Senatorial duties. When Mr. Benton saw I was armed, he paused, and in a second or two allowed Governor Dodge, the venerable Senator from Wisconsin, to conduct him to his chair. Before he had fairly reseated himself, Mr. Dickinson, of New York, asked me for my pistol, which I willingly handed him. Then it was that Mr. Benton broke out again vociferously, exclaiming, "Let the assassin shoot!" at the same time theatrically tearing open his vest. I made a short explanation of my conduct to the Senate, after which the affair was referred to a special committee, whose report and the evidence annexed thereto occupy one large printed volume, in which future generations will find a huge and somewhat incongruous mass of facts of a very ludicrous and interesting character.

I will close this reminiscence with a somewhat curious anecdote: A few days after the two Senators from Cali

fornia, Messrs. Gwin and Fremont, were admitted to the seats which they had been quietly claiming for several months, the latter, Mr. Fremont, introduced several bills, evidently drawn by Mr. Benton, his father-in-law, having relation to important local concerns in California, and of a nature, as I thought, if allowed to pass, to do very great detriment to valuable national interests in that quarter. Several old and valued friends of mine in California, and among these Judge Shattuck, had warned me in a very serious manner against these very movements. Before taking any decided step in the matter, I counseled with my old and valued friend, Dr. William M. Gwin, who I knew from more than twenty years' acquaintance and familiar intercourse would be sure to give me correct information. The Doctor, in very concise and decided language, confirmed all that Judge Shattuck had said on this subject, and stated that he should himself be disposed to do what he could to defeat these schemes of Colonel Fremont, but for the fact that he was his colleague, and he was desirous of cultivating harmony with him as far as he honorably could. I opposed each of these bills, and they were defeated. On the last night of the Senatorial session, when the general appropriation bill was on its passage, a renewed attempt was made on the part of Colonel Fremont, by an amendment to this bill which he introduced, to attain the very objects, or a portion thereof, for the purpose of realizing which his separate bills had been introduced. Amid the excitement and confusion of the moment this amendment was very near passing. No one had presented as yet any opposition to it when I got up and explained its true character, and urged Senators to aid me in defeating it. The amendment was voted down, and presently afterward the general appropriation bill passed; after which a motion was made to go into executive session, which was carried. Just as I was

putting my papers back into my drawer Colonel Fremont approached, and said, in a very quiet manner, that he wished to speak with me outside the Senate. I knew very well what this meant; for before this time I had never been even introduced to this gentleman, as in truth I never have yet been. I replied to him that I would join him immediately; which I did. When we got together, outside the central door of the hall, he turned to me and said, "Colonel Benton is not at all pleased with your conduct this evening." "Ah!" said I; "this is truly unfortunate, as I have been laboring assiduously to conciliate this father-in-law of yours for several years." Upon which, growing a little excited, he said? "I do not myself like the manner in which you have been intermeddling with my California affairs." "I should like to know," (I responded,) "what California affairs you can possibly have to attend to here which I, as a Senator from the State of Mississippi, may not properly meddle with." I continued thus, substantially: "Colonel Fremont, I beg to say to you that you have waked up the wrong passenger. Whilst I am in the Senate, I shall act a fearless and independent part, regardless whom it may offend save my own constituents." To this he answered: "You are not a gentleman." So soon as these words were uttered I struck him. Just as he was apparently proceeding to return the blow, Senators Clarke and Mangum came hastily through the folding-doors of the Senate, and prevented any further hostilities.

In about an hour a gentleman from New Jersey, who was afterward Governor of that State, brought me rather a strangely worded note from Colonel Fremont, which I recognized as virtually a challenge to the field of honor. I wrote a reply immediately that I would proceed to Baltimore early in the morning and send an acceptance from that place. Before the Senate adjourned Messrs. Gwin,

Jones, and Dodge, of that body, waited upon me and informed me that they were just from Colonel Benton's residence, where they had demanded that this affair should proceed no further, and urged that I should consent to withdraw my note in order that Colonel Fremont might be able to withdraw his. To this I very promptly consented. I proceeded to the State of Mississippi next morning. In a few days thereafter my honored and truly chivalrous friend, the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, transmitted me a copy of a very denunciatory hand-bill just issued by Colonel Fremont, of which Colonel Benton was himself undoubtedly the author, and urged me under all the circumstances existing to take no notice whatever thereof. I followed his advice.

Several years thereafter, when Colonel Fremont was in a manner so extraordinary put in nomination for the Presidency, I chanced to be a resident of San Francisco, in California. One morning, when seated in my professional office in that city, several worthy gentlemen came in. They were political friends of Colonel Fremont, but very good personal friends of my own. They called my attention to an article recently printed in the Cleveland *Plaindealer*, in which their Presidential candidate had been fiercely assailed, and in which he was accused, during his occupancy of a seat in the Senate, of having made a violent and cruel assault upon a very aged and decrepit brother member of that body, (meaning myself,) and it was insisted that a man of such ferocious manners was wholly unworthy of Presidential promotion. These gentlemen asked me to read the article, which I did, and then inquired of me as to the truth of its statements. I was happy at having it in my power to say to them that their Presidential candidate had received great injustice at the hands of the *Plaindealer*. They then inquired of me whether I would make a certificate to that effect, to

be used in the canvass, to which I assented, and formally certified that it was not true that Colonel Fremont had ever stricken me in his life, and subjoined that, had he done so, I was quite competent to defend myself against any assault which he could possibly have made, and so ended this remarkable affair. *Vive la bagatelle! Vive la humbug!*

REMINISCENCE No. XXXII.

JOHN A. QUITMAN—SECESSION STRUGGLE IN MISSISSIPPI IN 1851.

I have had occasion to speak heretofore more than once of a gentleman whom I knew long and well, and whose distinguished career, both in peace and in war, seems to claim a more formal notice at my hands than he has yet received. No citizen of the South can be mentioned whose character and acts have a closer or more important connection with the great historic events which have been occurring during the last twenty years in the State of Mississippi, and in several adjoining States, as well as with the remarkable consequences which have flowed therefrom, than those of the subject of the present reminiscence.

I do not propose to write the life of General John A. Quitman. This I learn has been done in a very satisfactory manner already by some writer, judged by the admirers of General Quitman to be altogether competent to this task. My present intention is to bring as far as I can into a distinct and luminous view a few of the more salient points in his busy and troublous history, and to give a more explicit account than has heretofore been published of the peculiar relations subsisting between that gentleman and myself.

John A. Quitman was a native of the State of New York, and was of German extraction. He received an excellent collegiate education, and is said to have been intended for the Christian ministry. When he reached mature years, though, he declined this vocation and resolved to devote himself to the profession of the law. He

had scarcely attained the age of twenty-one when he migrated to the State of Ohio. There he did not remain long, but somewhere between 1820 and 1825 descended the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and reached the city of Natchez, where he located permanently. His person was one of great impressiveness, his manners were those of a modest, well-bred gentleman, and his habits of life were such as were well calculated to commend him to general esteem and confidence in that rich and refined community. He was fortunate enough very soon to attract the attention of Mr. Griffith, who had become eminent as a lawyer at Natchez, had married a daughter of the late Chief Justice Edward Turner, of Mississippi, and obtained by this connubial association with a most beautiful and accomplished lady quite a competent fortune. I may be excused for mentioning here, in passing, that Judge Turner, as I have heard from his own lips, was a native of Fairfax county, Virginia, and was nephew to that particular Mr. Payne who is represented in Weems' "Life of Washington," as having knocked down General Washington, at Fairfax Court-house, in a quarrel which accidentally occurred between them at that place. This curious incident is set forth by Mr. Weems in a very graphic and interesting manner. The descendants of this Mr. Payne are now scattered through Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, many of whom I have known personally in former years.

Soon after the partnership just mentioned was formed between Griffith and Quitman, the latter married a Miss Turner, a very wealthy and accomplished lady, who was cousin-german to the wife of Mr. Griffith. During the continuance of the partnership, which was only terminated, at the end of four years, by the decease of Mr. Griffith, the firm divided $54,000 of net profits, as I have several times heard mentioned by General Quitman him-

self. Quitman then formed a partnership with Mr. John L. McMurran, which lasted until the former was made Chancellor of Mississippi, which last event occurred about two years before I first saw the subject of this notice.

Mr. McMurran married, also, a Miss Turner, the sister of Mr. Griffith's wife, took a very high position at the bar, and lived for many years, beloved and honored by the whole community. He was my intimate friend for many years, and in the fierce political contest of 1851 sustained me for the office of Governor against General Quitman himself, mainly, of course, in consequence of his intense devotion to the Union cause.

General Quitman, when placed upon the chancery bench, was one of the youngest men that had ever been raised to a judicial office of such high dignity in any part of the Republic. He sustained himself well in this very responsible position, and continued to act as chancellor to the entire satisfaction of intelligent men of all parties, until he at last voluntarily resigned his office, and returned to the practice of the law. Meanwhile he had become one of the wealthiest men in Mississippi, and was understood to live in a style of almost princely elegance.

It is a remarkable fact, and certainly one very creditable to General Quitman, that though he had opposed with more than ordinary zeal and strenuousness the incorporation of the principle of popular suffrage in the election of judicial officers; and though the new constitution, with this feature embodied in it, had been almost unanimously adopted, yet when a new chancellor had to be elected under the amended constitution, he was re-elected to this dignified post without opposition from any quarter. I had the honor to act as one of a committee of three (of whom the late John I. Guion and Hon. William A. Bodely, of Louisville, Ky., were the other two members) appointed to solicit General Quitman to be a candidate for

re-election. I may be allowed to mention here, as rather a curious fact, that the proposition to elect judges by the people—a thing which had never at that time been known in this country, save in Connecticut in early colonial times—was first made by this Reminiscent in a newspaper published in the city of Vicksburg, over the signature of "Thomas Jefferson," more than forty years ago; and my numbers on this subject purporting to have been written upon the authority of this eminent Democratic statesman, who had very forcibly recommended this mode of election in his celebrated letter to Mr. Kercheval, to be found in the fourth volume of Mr. Jefferson's works. These numbers of mine were responded to with much spirit and ability by Judge Bodely—the gentleman already mentioned—and will be recollected to have brought on a protracted and excited discussion at the court-house in Vicksburg, over which the Hon. William L. Sharkey presided. The connection which I chanced to have with this interesting question prompted a popular call upon me to be a candidate to represent in the convention, which had then already been convoked, the large Senatorial district extending along the bank of the Mississippi river for about two hundred miles from the then northern boundary of the State to a point about ninety miles south of Vicksburg; and I moved as rapidly as I could between the two remote points mentioned in the summer of 1832, in a common dug-out, calling on all the voters residing upon the bank of the "Father of Waters," drinking for the most part the muddy water of the river, and subsisting on cheese and smoked venison, with an occasional small supply of very indifferent bread. When I reached the lower terminus of the district I found myself in the hands of the ague and fever, and before I got entirely well the canvass had closed, and I found myself defeated by a majority of about forty votes. I had this

consolation only over the disappointment of my ambitious hopes: A very able man, the late Eugene McGehee, was elected over me, who, abandoning his opposition to the popular elective principle in the midst of the canvass, openly pledged himself to support it in the convention if elected. This gentleman being an old resident of Vicksburg, and an able and learned lawyer, was very naturally preferred to a young gentleman who had not then lived long enough in Mississippi to be even entitled to vote in any election whatever.

I undertake to say that the constitution of Mississippi embodied the popular suffrage idea, in connection with judicial elections, earlier than was done elsewhere since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. I was induced to propose it in the manner mentioned in consequence of a then recent perusal of Mr. Jefferson's writings, in which this mode of election is so highly recommended, especially in the letter already named, addressed by him to a Mr. Kercheval. There is scarcely an instance of a more rapid diffusion of any political notion whatever so directly in opposition to established public sentiment than now occurred all over the Union. I take no particular credit to myself for first suggesting this idea in Mississippi; and it would be indeed very ridiculous for me to do so, for I hold that experience has plainly shown this change in the mode of election to have been a great and most deplorable error, since for many years past it has, as I think, been found altogether impossible to keep politics out of the judicial elections; and hence a great and constantly-increasing deterioration of the judicial department of our system has been observable.

I now return to my theme. General Quitman, to the surprise of all who knew him in Mississippi, in 1833, became an ardent State-rights man or nullifier, and took a leading part in getting up a convention in the city of

Jackson, Mississippi, for the purpose of indoctrinating this State with this dangerous theory. I witnessed the discussions in this body, and immediately reviewed the same in the columns of the *Mississippian*, and with so much plainness and severity that General Quitman took serious offense thereat, so that, in truth, we did not speak for several years. When he subsequently ran for a seat in Congress against Mr. Gholson we accidentally met one night at a theater in Jackson, and became cordially reconciled.

The Mexican war was in active progress when he applied to me to recommend him to Mr. Polk for the commission of a brigadier general, he evidently supposing that my recommendation would be of some avail to him in the matter, on the ground that I then had the honor to be a member of the United States Senate for the State of Mississippi, though I had not yet taken my seat in that body. I complied with this request most cheerfully, and the more so perhaps because of the recent disappointment of the General's aspirations in the Senatorial election heretofore described, in which Governor McNutt had been so disastrously overthrown.

General Quitman's conduct in Mexico was eminently creditable to him. He fought first under General Taylor in the region of the Rio Grande, and afterward under General Scott in that memorable campaign marked with the conquest of the City of Mexico, of which place General Quitman will be remembered to have been for several months military governor.

During his sojourn in Mexico he frequently wrote to me, and in more than one letter besought me to see to his promotion, declaring that he had no other friend then in Congress from Mississippi upon whose support he could confidently rely. Meanwhile, Mr. Davis, whose conduct in Mexico had been mentioned favorably by General Taylor in his official reports, had, at the earnest instance of

myself and a few others, been appointed by Governor A. G. Brown to the Senatorial position which had then recently become vacant in consequence of the sudden decease of my very worthy colleague in that body, the Hon. Jesse D. Speight. Mr. Davis was a Democrat: a planter; and supposed to be possessed of somewhat more than ordinary intelligence, who we thought might be expected to get along very well in the Senate after he should have had the advantage of a little official experience. Unfortunately he and General Quitman had never been able to harmonize at all in military service, and Davis, as I personally know to be a fact, and as was very well and painfully known to General Quitman also, had been much in the habit, both in Mexico and elsewhere, of ridiculing the General's claims to military respectability.

Out of this state of things consequences soon arose of a highly disagreeable character. President Polk had bestowed upon General Quitman a brevet nomination for the dignity of major general on account of distinguished military services at Monterey. This nomination, for some reason or other, had lingered in the Committee on Military Affairs of the Senate for some time, though it was known that so soon as it should be reported back to the body it would be favorably acted upon. Mr. Benton, the chairman of the Military Committee, had been absent for some time, and it was not known when he would return. Meanwhile Mr. Davis was acting chairman of the committee. On the very day before the volunteer forces of the United States who had been on service in Mexico were to be discharged General Quitman came to my house, on the Georgetown Heights, and laid the above facts before me for consideration, saying to me, "My dear friend, my military reputation is in great danger. You know well Colonel Davis' unappeasable animosity to me. He has a thousand times traduced me while we were in service together in Mexico; was more than once openly in-

subordinate, relying, as he did, upon General Taylor's known partiality for him, and did all in his power to undermine my fame and impair my popularity, both with the troops that I commanded and with my fellow-citizens at home. I fear that he has me at last completely in his power, being, as I learn to be the fact, the present acting chairman of the Military Committee in the Senate, before which my brevet nomination for gallant conduct at Monterey is now pending. This is the last day on which this nomination can be confirmed, for the forces which I commanded in Mexico will be to-morrow discharged. He, Davis, must be made to report back the nomination to the Senate to-day, or I shall be a deeply-dishonored man. He pretends to have a technical objection to the confirmation of all such nominations in the volunteer branch of the service; but this is wholly untenable, as I will in a moment show you. [He then handed me a brief of the legal points involved, which I at once examined carefully and he then resumed.] Now I wish you this morning to move for an executive session of the Senate and demand of Mr. Davis his report upon my nomination. I care not whether it is favorable or unfavorable. I am satisfied that your appeal to the Senate in my behalf will be successful." He added: "I do not doubt that the performance of this duty of friendship will involve you in personal difficulty with Mr. Davis; but I am asking of you only to do for me what I feel I would cheerfully do for you were our positions exchanged." I at once answered that I would take pride in complying with his request. I accompanied him to the Capitol; moved for an executive session of the Senate; and on this being accorded I demanded of the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs his report upon General Quitman's nomination. Mr. Douglas aided me in the movement on account of the fact that his friend, General Shields, occupied a position similar to that of

General Quitman. Mr. Davis for some time hesitated to make his report. When he did so it was an unfavorable one. Mr. Douglas and myself then attacked his report, succeeded in overthrowing its reasonings, and got both Quitman and Shields confirmed almost unanimously. Very bitter words were spoken on this occasion between Mr. Davis and myself in the hearing of our brother Senators, and I did not hesitate to charge him with illiberality and injustice toward a meritorious comrade in arms, and I even menaced him with the exposition of his unworthy conduct to our constituents in Mississippi.

General Quitman, when the result was reported to him, was full of rejoicing and gratitude. This gentleman was nominated, not long after, to the office of Governor of Mississippi, and he was elected, also, chiefly by force of his military popularity. He was holding the office of Governor when the famous compromise struggle of 1850 occurred. My own position was such in Washington that I stood greatly in need of some generous and devoted friend at the capital of Mississippi, and I fondly looked in the direction of General Quitman for sympathy and support. All my five colleagues from Mississippi were warmly opposed to the compromise measures of 1850, and became much offended with me because of my support of them. I intend no offense to any one when I state that they secretly combined against me in Washington and used what influence they possessed in Mississippi for my political ruin. General Quitman, I grieve to say, acted with them. The Legislature of the State was induced to censure me in resolutions of a particularly disrespectful and acrimonious character. My five colleagues went home, and in connection with Governor Quitman called a large public meeting at the city of Jackson, and set on foot a new political party to be called the State-Rights party of Mississippi, of which all were invited to become members

who were opposed to the Compromise and my course in support of the measures embodied therein without regard to previous party names or antecedents.

I got home about a month afterward. I found almost the whole Legislature arrayed against me, the Executive department, and nearly all the judicial officers of the State. The newspapers were nearly all of the secession stamp. Under these circumstances I plainly saw there was only one course to pursue, and I adopted it. I immediately challenged Governor Quitman to public discussion of the pending questions at the State capital. He accepted the challenge, but was suddenly taken sick, and did not come to the field of expected conflict. I went to the capital myself and addressed the large crowd assembled, in language of the utmost warmth and plainness, and announced my determination at once to go over the State and personally urge the people to assemble in convention at Jackson on the very day upon which the Legislature had been summoned to reassemble. I went forth accordingly, traveled night and day, made some forty public addresses, and on the day that the Legislature came together the individuals composing it learned with affright that a popular convention of fifteen hundred members was then sitting in the City Hall, and was proceeding to rebuke their own treasonable action, and to censure the censurers. Our convention was indeed a noble body, and I shall ever regard it as the proudest occasion of my life when I addressed this numerous assemblage of upright and intelligent citizens, standing in the opening made by the removal of a large window in the City Hall, and addressing those assembled both within the house and on the outside. The resolutions adopted by this worthy body were soon printed and cast abroad, and I then proceeded to the hall of the House of Representatives in the State Legislature, and demanded a hearing from that body. The

House adjourned and yielded to me the hall, and I devoted full two hours to the task of explaining to those assembled the dangers of the hour. After this I proceeded to Washington.

When the next summer came the struggle so fiercely waged in Mississippi had to be brought to a termination. A convention had been called by the Legislature of the State to assemble in Jackson in the succeeding autumn, to determine this precise question: "Will Mississippi join South Carolina in the act of secession from the Federal Union, proposed by the latter State?" This question was to be settled by the election of delegates to the convention. Some one was to be elected Governor to carry the project of secession into effect, provided co-operation with South Carolina should be determined on. Quitman was nominated as secession candidate for Governor. I was nominated as the candidate of the Union party, called into existence in the preceding year. We took the field as opposing candidates, and confronted each other first at the Capitol in Jackson. Before either of us spoke I said to him in a low but very distinct tone, "General, in looking over the past, it seems to me a little strange that I should now find you in combination with Davis for my overthrow. Have you forgotten my contest with him in the United States Senate, when he was seeking to destroy your well-earned military fame? Have you forgotten your assurances then of future friendship?" "Surely," he said, pretty sternly, "you do not intend to discuss that matter to-day." "Certainly not," I replied, "but still I can not help painfully remembering this part of our past history." We addressed the people at some length in Jackson that day. We met on about seven or eight occasions afterward, when he found his cause utterly indefensible, and resolved to break up our joint appointments. For this purpose he insulted me grossly at a place

called Sledgeville. I resented it; we fought, and he immediately published separate appointments. I went through the State alone, warning the people everywhere of the perils of the crisis. By the time we both got back to Jackson the election of conventional delegates, which preceded by a month the election of Governor, was over, and my respectable opponent found that the very convention, the calling of which he had himself recommended, would, when it should assemble, declare almost unanimously against the breaking up of the Federal Union. Not being willing to encounter the actual defeat of his gubernatorial claims, which he saw plainly menaced, he at once withdrew from the canvass, resigned the office of Governor, and went home. Mr. Davis, who had till then remained pretty much *perdu*, was brought forth as a candidate, with the hope that by adroitly putting this brilliant military chieftain upon a regular Democratic platform, and declaring that all further thoughts of breaking up the Union were renounced, they would be able to cajole the people into supporting him. But in a few weeks he was seen wending his way to "Briarfield," on the bank of the Mississippi, where he would have slumbered in deserved obscurity up to the present moment but for Mr. Pierce's calling him forth to give him another chance to ruin his country.

General Quitman afterward came to Congress as a Representative from a district where he was personally well known and much loved. He found the national House of Representatives a very unfavorable theater for the exhibition of his particular species of ability, and when I last saw him in Washington he professed to be greatly disgusted with the conduct of some of those with whom he found himself politically associated, and even talked seriously about resigning his seat. A few months after this he died, and was, as I think, exceedingly fortunate

in doing so before all the terrible evils brought upon the country by secession had been realized.

Let me do General Quitman justice. He was truthful, honest, brave, of a slow and plodding intellect, but in regard to ordinary matters, sound and practical in his views. He was over ambitious, fond of taking the lead in all things, somewhat given to selfishness, and was altogether the dullest and most prosy speaker I have ever known who could speak at all. With a good deal more of solid intellect than Mr. Davis, and a far truer heart, and surpassing him also much in information, he was inferior to him in what is called flippancy of expression, and he was certainly far behind him also in impudent effrontery, in low and vulgar cunning, and in a capacity for bringing into advantageous and effective use the multiplied arts of deception.

REMINISCENCE No. XXXIII.

ELIAB KINGMAN—GENERAL HENRY A. WISE—INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS IN VIRGINIA—POLITICAL BOURBONISM.

I propose to say something here of two individuals as strikingly contrasted to each other almost as it is possible that members of the same race could well be, at least in temper and habits of life, as well as in the careers that they have severally run—albeit there is much in the character and example of each of them quite worthy of respect, of love, and even of a certain sort of admiration.

When I was in the twelfth year of my age, I was occupied in front of my quiet paternal home, in the lower part of the famed county of Fauquier, in Virginia, in some trivial employment, on a fine autumnal evening, when I saw riding up to the gate which opened into the green and shaded yard a tall, good-looking young gentleman, who, after having inquired whether my father was in the house, and having learned that he was, descended from his horse, and approached the mansion, at the door of which he was met by my loved and venerated parent, who saluted him cordially, and invited him to enter his ever-hospitable abode. It was but natural that I should myself feel some curiosity as to what might turn out to be the cause of this unexpected visit. This was soon made known, for the stranger, before seating himself, handed my father a letter, which informed him that the name of the bearer thereof was Eliab Kingman; that he had recently graduated at some celebrated New England university or college, and that he had now come South to obtain employment, if he could do so, as a teacher of the Latin and Greek languages, and of the ordinary branches of an En-

glish education. I saw at once that the young and modest stranger had made a fine impression upon my paternal protector and guide, and that the long-desired opportunity would now be afforded me of moving forward in a course of intellectual culture which I had been always taught to regard as indispensable to the character of a refined and well-bred gentleman, as well as of a patriotic and useful citizen. The school was soon organized, and Mr. Kingman, in a week or two, saw around him some fifteen or twenty boys, all of whom were intent upon acquiring, as rapidly as possible, all that he was capable of teaching them, and of fitting themselves in this way for the multiplied duties of the life which lay before them. It must be confessed that though the members of this school were in general assiduous and well-behaved, yet that there were a number of scenes occurring during the year indicating a little more than the customary vivacity of restless boyhood, and it is certain that all the rules of decorum prescribed by our youthful magister were not always duly respected; and I suspect that he must have been often a good deal annoyed by ebullitions of exuberant gayety and frolicksomeness which he was compelled to witness. But never did I see a frown upon Mr. Kingman's visage during the year that he was sojourning among us. He was always cheerful, civil, and even affectionate, and seemed to take the greatest delight in giving such aid to the pupils under his charge as he supposed them to need at his hands. He lived for nearly a year in the house which had given me birth, was uniformly treated as if he had been one of the family, and when he left us for a more profitable school offered to him elsewhere there was not one of my father's family who did not painfully regret the loss of his pleasant and instructive society.

Some years after this Mr. Kingman married an amiable and accomplished Virginia lady, a very near relative

of the late distinguished and most meritorious Confederate officer, General Ewell, and located himself in that portion of the city of Washington where he now resides. He very early purchased here a considerable quantity of land, then cultivated as a field, which is at this moment overspread with some of the most costly and tasteful edifices anywhere to be found in this splendid metropolitan city. Here he continued his literary studies, which he had in fact never much pretermitted; and, while thus becoming a man of large and varied attainments, he occupied himself for many years with the preparation of various well-written articles for the *National Intelligencer* and other newspapers of eminent standing and influence, which very soon won for him much reputation, and which, as I suppose, were also a source of considerable pecuniary profit. While I had the honor of holding a seat in Congress, Mr. Kingman was an occasional contributor to several well-known newspapers; but the letters from his facile pen which every morning appeared in the Baltimore *Sun*, over the signature of "Ion," possessed an attractiveness altogether unequaled at that period in this class of writing. They were generally short, never extending over more than three-quarters of a column of that widely-circulating gazette, but were always smoothly and beautifully written, in a neat, polished, and sometimes very pointed style, ever supplying some new and interesting intelligence touching current Congressional events not to be found elsewhere, and very often presenting graphic and racy descriptions of eminent public men then upon the stage. These articles evinced the greatest astuteness of mind, and were of practical utility to many understandings not much inclined to receive instruction in forms grosser and less attractive. I have long thought that the letters of "Ion," if collected and published at this time in one connected whole would prove alike entertaining and

edifying to those who did not have an opportunity of perusing them at the time of their first appearance.

Mr. Kingman is now, as I suppose, somewhere about seventy-five years of age. He is yet vigorous and active in mind and body; is as cheerful and sociable as he was when I first knew him, more than a half-century since; and his remarkable memory seems to have retained without either loss or discoloration from the influence of time and the varied accidents of life, all that he has ever heretofore learned, either of men or things, as well as all that the calm and patient study of a lifetime could accumulate amid the treasure-houses of science and scholastic literature. His ordinary conversation, which is never marked with the smallest tincture of bitterness or envy, is of far more value to a person of taste and discernment than would prove the boasted volumes of many professed authors of considerable celebrity. He is, indeed, as pure a model as I have ever known of domestic and social excellence, and has so passed his life as never to have made a single enemy, or to have been accused of performing a single act of which an Atticus himself would have been ashamed. It is obvious that had such a man as I have described been ambitious of political preferment, there are but few civil stations to which he might not have aspired without justly incurring the charge of presumption; but it is hardly possible that he could ever have been tempted to resort to those expedients which experience has shown to be almost indispensable to political advancement in a republic like ours. I doubt not that it is for him, upon the whole, better that he should have lived a life of quietude and repose, and have been thus able to preserve to old age the feelings of philosophic serenity and unbroken contentedness, the enjoyment of which the golden treasures of earth are not of power to

guarantee, nor all the efforts of the unjust and malevolent of this world capable of taking away.

Integer vitæ scelerisque purus
Non eget Mauri jaculis, neque arcu,
Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetra;

Sive per Syrtes iter æstuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quæ loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes.

I shall venture to express the opinion, though to all this opinion may not appear well founded, that within a scope of territory not more than a hundred miles square on the Virginia side of the Potomac a larger number of splendid and useful public men has appeared in the course of a single century than any other country can claim to have produced in the same space of time as the natives of a landed region of no greater extent and inhabited by a population not more numerous. I would fix the beginning of this hundred years on the 1st day of January, 1720, and close it on the last of December, 1819. Persons whose attention has not been specially turned to this matter will be a little surprised to see the number of illustrious names which adorn this list of the great and good men of the Old Dominion who belonged to the category specified, a small portion of whom only will be here specified: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Patrick Henry, John Marshall, Richard Henry Lee and several brothers, all nearly of equal distinction with himself; Light-horse Harry Lee, as he was called; George Wythe, George Mason, Chancellor Pendleton, Spencer Roane, Edmund Randolph, John Randolph of Roanoke, Littleton Walter Tazewell, Henry

Clay, Chapman Johnson, Benjamin Watkins Leigh, William H. Crawford, John Forsyth, William B. Giles, James and Philip P. Barbour, General Scott, General Taylor, General Harrison, General Gaines, General Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, William C. Preston, James Brown, General Joseph E. Johnston, with numerous others of a grade only a little inferior to these. I certainly intend to do no wrong to my loved native State when I confess that, from the operation of causes a little difficult to explain, she does not seem to have been altogether as prolific of illustrious men of late as she was when her population was far less. I would not undertake to assert that she is not even at the present time nearly equal in her number of distinguished citizens to several other States whose origin was very nearly cotemporaneous with her her own; and on this disagreeable topic I prefer to say no more on this occasion lest I should tempt some one to apply to me the well-known words of Horace:

> Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
> Te puero, censor castigatorque minorum.

A few of those of the present generation whom I have more or less known, and who may, therefore, be classed as coming within the circle of my reminiscence, may deserve at least a passing notice.

There is a very conspicuous citizen of Virginia whom, for a hundred various reasons, I have always regretted not to have known better. Some have charged him with being eccentric, as most men of genius have been by the dull-headed and plodding sons of obscurity, whose intellectual pinions were not of sufficient vigor and pliancy to lift them to the regions of the upper air: for, as Byron very justly says:

> He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
> The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;

He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head.
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

My earliest recollection of General Wise stands associated with the duel between himself and Mr. Coke, his first opponent for Congress, with whom I have heard that he had very fiercely discussed the question of *nullification*, then broached by visionary politicians for the first time, at least in any grave and formal manner. The General was then, if I remember aright, a champion of the Union cause, and a supporter of General Jackson's famous proclamation against South Carolina.

I am not certain that I ever heard of Henry A. Wise until about the time he first became a candidate for Congress, though with his previous career I must of necessity have since become familiar, since for nearly sixteen years past I have resided in the vicinage where his public career was commenced; and concerning his early life I have heard a thousand anecdotes from the lips of that genial, high-souled gentleman, Bailie Peyton, and from others. Besides, General Wise has, within a year or two past, published a brilliant and interesting volume, called, I believe, "The Seven Decades," in which he has told the world almost as much of the particular period of his life referred to as he was able to do without some appearance of egotism; to which book I have really only one objection, which I will specify: I think that he has been tempted by the fervor of genius to make too harsh and too unkind a portrayal of his old friend and political leader, Mr. Clay, for whose character I have far more both of respect and affection than he would seem now to cherish.

I have been a very close and interested observer of General Wise's political course in later years. Of many of his public acts and speeches I have very warmly approved; others of them I have very decidedly condemned. I have never ceased, though, to sympathize kindly with him on account of some very generous and striking traits of character for which I felt bound to give him credit. His personal bravery is as undisputed as that of the Chevalier Bayard himself. His integrity and truth have well nigh passed into a proverb, and his complete exemption from what Virgil calls the *auri sacra fames* has been creditably conspicuous in every stage of his long and somewhat tempestuous career. His temperament is a remarkably mercurial one; he is far more excitable than ordinary men, and phrenologists would upon the slightest examination of his well-formed cranium pronounce his organ of combativeness to be developed in a manner very remarkable; to which circumstance, I doubt not, he is in a great degree indebted for the manly and persevering efficiency which he has manifested in every good cause in whose furtherance his energies have at different times become enlisted. That Mr. Wise is richly endowed with those qualities which tend most to give success and celebrity in the field of popular discussion, is a proposition which no man who is at all acquainted with him would think for a moment of denying. He writes also with great facility, and when he chooses to do so, is capable of expressing himself in a spirited, vigorous, and exceedingly pointed style, such, in fact, as would do credit to any of the more distinguished authors that our country has yet produced. He has occasionally written at great length upon subjects not very interesting to the more numerous class of American readers, and has, therefore, in such instances, failed to secure such uniform approval of the deliberate emanations of his genius as would, perhaps, have been accorded

him. But I have seen some specimens of his power as a writer which conclusively demonstrate that he lacked only a little more care for his own literary reputation, and a somewhat more painstaking spirit, to command universal recognition as a bold, original thinker, and as one of the most vigorous, persuasive, and eloquent writers that has appeared in this generation. I exceeding doubt whether Virginia has given birth, in the present century, to a man of more genius than Henry A. Wise; and I have observed with much satisfaction of late that he is giving close attention to works of science and to the development of great economical truths—truths which have a real and almost inappreciable value to all the States of the South and to Virginia in particular, at the present trying period of her history. The last of the more deliberate productions of General Wise, in the line just mentioned, is an address delivered by him recently "before the Literary Societies of Roanoke College, in Salem, Virginia." The important subject discussed by him is very distinctly presented on the first page of his admirable lecture, and in the following striking words:

North America is yet new, and, God be praised! is yet hopeful. My theme, then, is:

"The physical structure of the domain of the United States, and its effect in the past and the present, and its probable effect in the future, upon their progress, power, peace, commerce, and constitutions of government."

A more comprehensive and inspiring subject than that herein indicated has never engaged the attention of men of thoughtful and scrutinizing minds in any age of the world. To say that General Wise has done justice to this grand and important theme would be but moderate praise, as all discerning and fair-minded men will say who may read his interesting and edifying address. As a specimen of the calm and philosophical style in which his views are

enunciated I extract, almost at random, the following paragraph:

Prior to the year 1803 the United States were comparatively constrained in their limits, but the epoch of that date determined the national supremacy of North America at least, if not eventually of the world. Mr. Jefferson solved the problem by acquiring a territory which conjoined the physical geography of the continent with the powers which governed its settlements. The Missouri and Mississippi rivers were both made ours; the mouth of the latter was joined politically with its head; outlets were opened; conflicting riparian rights no longer obstructed internal or foreign trade; mountain ranges and water-sheds and quays of commerce were put under the same sovereignty, and the New World was spanned to the Pacific by an empire of the United States. This policy was completed in the acquisition of Florida in 1819 with her barricade of the Gulf stream, and nature was followed in her plan of a whole and compact country. Then the Government of the United States was conjoined to the physical powers and causes which control the continent and its destinies.

The following additional extract will be read with interest:

The junction of the physical geography of the country, with its political powers, by the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, was the first epoch of internal trade; and the second commenced with the artificial lines from the coast to the interior, by roads and canals, transverse to the natural lines of valleys and rivers. George Washington, in this, as in everything else, was foremost in conceiving and commencing the first and most important artificial lines. With that almost preternatural prescience which was to be looked for only from such wisdom and virtue as God gave him, pre-eminently he foresaw the necessity of connecting the mouth of the Ohio midway the valley of the Mississippi, and midway between the lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, with the mouth of the Chesapeake bay, midway the Atlantic coast, on the same parallel of latitude. We can hardly imagine that then he contemplated the great artificial belt of transit which is now begun between the Pacific and Atlantic coast, passing through the whole interior of the continent. But he did foresee the true eastern terminus of that belt, and projected the Chesapeake and Ohio and the James River and Kanawha canals, and they are now the most important works in this country yet to be constructed, to reach the great interior by the shortest and cheapest routes of trade, and to bind the extremest parts of this vast country together by the strongest bands of union.

I wish I had space to set forth here what General Wise so nobly and perspicuously says in support of the proposition that—

The Mississippi river, by its flow in the center from north to south, proved the surest cordon of the Union of these States, the North with the South.

I can not refrain from citing what he afterward enunciates so impressively as to the effect of the late civil war in bringing about the extinction of slavery:

That cause alone (slavery) made the Southern States stagnant. The globe would not be habitable if its oceans were not agitated by storms, evaporated by the sun, congealed by frost, and cleansed by perpetual currents. And as of the currents of air and of the waters it may be said that they often conflict with each other, yet their very cyclones and whirlpools are made by God's providence to give motion and purification and life; so of our civil war it may be said, I hope, in time to come, that it gave a new life to the country and all its parts, which may atone for the many precious lives which were taken away by its "fire and sword." Nothing but intra-territorial war could have given this new life: and it was sent by God, not only because the exodus of slavery had come, but to make the motion of commerce and arts and migration southward. The two Virginias will now be filled with population from abroad and from other States at home, and the whole South will soon be strong enough to do a great moral duty on their part.

If these views be sound, (and who will now contest them?) how can any reasonable man doubt the justice and wisdom of the constitutional amendments which secured to the *Heaven-emancipated* colored race those civil rights without which freedom would be but the most cruel of mockeries? I shall not willingly believe that a man of General Wise's sagacity could fail to perceive that the communication of the right of suffrage to the freedmen of the South was the natural and indispensable accompaniment of universal amnesty to those of the white race recently in rebellion. Had this important safeguard been promptly and voluntarily accorded by the ancient white residents themselves of the South, immediately after

the war had closed, so that the colored inhabitants of that section might not have been thrown upon the carpet-bag gentry for protection, it must now be most manifest to all that this most docile and affectionate race would long since have become thoroughly assimilated in feeling, as they doubtless are in *interest*, with those who had previously held them in servitude; and this Republic would some time ago have enjoyed that repose and prosperity which General Wise himself seems so ardently to covet. It is to be hoped that a man of General Wise's abilities and popularity will not be inactive at this important moment in our history as a people in reconciling all good and true men to each other upon the only possible basis of permanent concord and prosperity: "*The Constitution as it is*, and the laws *enacted for the enforcement thereof*." I trust to be excused for saying that such a man as General Henry A. Wise has no right to hide his light under a bushel now when the country seems so much to need its guiding influence, more especially as I see from the newspaper reports that ex-Senator Hunter, who was so active, in his own peculiar mode, in bringing on the late civil war, and who is, next to Jeff. Davis, personally responsible for all its dire consequences, is now pursuing a course well calculated to revive and perpetuate agitation, and place the whole colored population of the South in a state of never-ending antagonism to the white inhabitants of that region. Senator Hunter is the best specimen now extant of the American political Bourbonite, or that peculiar class of worthies who never forget anything and never learn anything; and if it is true, as I am told is the case, that he is now every day insulting the whole colored population of Virginia by asserting that "experience has shown that they are not true Virginians, although they be native born, and that they are aliens in feeling and sentiment, in sympathy and in sensibilities,"

it is high time that some such bold cavalier as General Wise should gird on his armor to prevent the building up anew of the carpet-bag interest, which I repeat owes its origin and continued existence alone to such madness as is now being perpetrated by those in Virginia and elsewhere who utter such unpractical nonsense as is daily reported to the public from Mr. Hunter's lips. It really seems to me surprising that a high-bred Virginia gentleman like Mr. Hunter, after having sought so earnestly the restoration of his political rights at the hands of Congress, as he is known to have done, and after having had his disabilities so magnanimously relieved by that body, should thus seize the earliest opportunity presented to him of making known to the world that he feels not a particle of gratitude for the favor extended him. I have a very painful recollection of the course pursued by this distinguished gentleman and his late colleague, Mr. Mason, in the Virginia Democratic Convention of 1860, held at Charlottesville. The latter I then saw for the last time at a very numerous assemblage of the people who constitute the celebrated Tenth Legion in the valley of Virginia. Mr. Mason addressed that meeting in a very plain and frank manner, and in language not deficient in distinctness, avowed the fell purpose which the faction represented by him had then in view. When he closed his speech, and I rose to respond, he became much agitated, (though I certainly violated no rule of courtesy,) and as I proceeded to unfold the whole scheme of seditious resistance then on foot, and to warn my fellow-countrymen of the dangers impending, hundreds yet living saw this gentleman leap from the back window of the court-house where we were speaking, evidently for the purpose of getting as quickly as he could beyond the sounds of popular indignation then thunderingly breaking forth. I have never yet seen one of the prominent fomenters of

sedition that was able calmly to stand fire, and I should myself willingly travel several hundred miles to hear General Wise respond to one of Mr. Hunter's drowsy, phlegmatic, and over-crammed political discourses.

My first personal acquaintance with General Wise was formed under very peculiar circumstances. He had fought for a long time in support of the Confederate cause most valiantly and faithfully. He had for several years in succession been compelled to go through as many trials and sufferings as any man who participated in that struggle. A cold-hearted and obstinate executive chief, for reasons which I could never precisely divine, had kept him in an official position far beneath the grade of his abilities and the value of his actual services. He had still fought on, at the head of his noble legion, with uncomplaining patience, while he saw daily and hourly men of far inferior capacity, and with no real claims to special consideration and respect, placed above him on the roll of promotion. At length the disastrous affair of Roanoke Island occurred, at which fatal spot he lost a valiant and accomplished son, whose budding merits had already awakened expectations of early and brilliant distinction. Just about this time illiberal and unjust rumors were set afloat by persons envious of General Wise's growing fame, which gave him peculiar annoyance. A report which he made of his own military conduct on a most important occasion was sent to the War Department in Richmond, where Mr. Judah P. Benjamin was playing the part of the old Old Man of the Sea whom Sinbad describes. Mr. Benjamin would not acknowledge officially the reception of General Wise's report unless he would consent to let it pass through the hands of General Huger, his superior in command, an individual whom he well knew to be deeply inimical to him, and who was directly interested in shifting a most crushing military responsibility from his own shoulders

to those of General Wise; so that the latter was left without any adequate means of vindicating his own conduct as an officer.

It was precisely under these circumstances that that courteous and high-bred gentleman, Colonel James Lyons, General Wise's brother-in-law, came to me and urged that I should in the House of Representatives offer a resolution demanding of the Secretary of War that he should send to that body a copy of General Wise's report, with a view to its examination there, and its eventual publication. This act of mere justice to a meritorious officer who, I was satisfied, was undergoing cruel persecution, I could not in honor refuse to perform. I succeeded in attaining the object of the resolution, upon which I was asked by Mr. Lyons to go over to his own professional office, where I was told that General Wise was, for the purpose of enabling this gentleman to tender to me his thanks for the kindness exercised toward him. This he soon did in a manner most knightly and impressive; since which time I have not had the honor of meeting him or of holding any direct intercourse with him whatever.

REMINISCENCE No. XXXIV.

VICKSBURG SENTINEL—DR. HAGAN—GENERAL ADAMS—GOVERNOR A. G. M'NUTT.

Great and imperishable is the fame of Vicksburg! Renowned alike in peace and in war! I beheld it when in point of population and trade it was little more than an ordinary village. I resided there when many persons yet survived who mentioned to me, as a matter within their own personal knowledge, the fact that the beautiful and romantic site which has since been the theater of so many great and memorable events had been exchanged by its unprophetic owner for a pitiful horse, not worth a single hundred dollars. It was my fortune to move through the streets of Vicksburg not many years after my eyes had first rested upon her primeval, cottage-like residences, when her thronged thoroughfares had become the resort and permanent abode of wealth, refinement, and intelligence, and when her steep, alluvial hills had been overspread with splendid edifices, which the nobles of the earth might have been content to inhabit; when learned and upright judges were peacefully and satisfactorily administering the justice of the land in well-constructed court-houses, and eloquent and accomplished barristers were almost every day making speeches, such as would have done honor to any people under the sun. I have heard political discussions in Vicksburg, continued from day to day, in the hearing of such assemblages as even Cicero or Demosthenes would not have scorned to address, and upon questions of greater dignity and importance than either the populace of Rome or Athens ever had submitted to them. Nearly all of those with whom I once

delighted to hold free and fraternal commune in Vicksburg, forty years ago, have either passed to the grave or have migrated to distant regions. Were I now to visit this scene of my early exertions, it is possible that I would not meet a dozen faces that I should recognize, and I am quite certain that I might go there and spend a week in some frequented public house without awakening any very marked sensation in any segment of that bustling and rapidly improving metropolis.

It is not probable that I shall ever again survey those loved localities once so familiar to me. I have little inclination to institute minute inquiries now as to how many of my acquaintances and cherished friends of a former day are yet lingering where I last encountered them; but yet are there incidents which occurred in my young days of hopefulness and vigor of which I yet cherish recollections alike pleasant and mournful.

In 1832 I established, in connection with an esteemed friend and brother-in-law, Mr. R. P. Catlett, the newspaper known as *The Mississippian*, for many years recognized, in subsequent years, and in the hands of several successive editors, as the faithful and efficient organ of what was known as the Democratic party of Mississippi. Cæsar, when falling before the violence of infuriate conspirators, is said to have exclaimed: "*Et tu Brute, mi fili!*" The dying eagle has been poetically depictured as doubly bewailing his own death-wound when he found the arrow which had pierced his vitals had been feathered with the plumage of his own wing. And so I, if at all given to lamentation over the past, might, perhaps, with some reason, complain that the most unsparing assailment with which I have been visited at several noted periods of my bustling career has originated in the columns of that far-famed journal, in relation to which Governor McNutt is said to have ejaculated, in the very latest mo-

ments of his checkered life: "Where is the *Mississippian?*" I lived long enough in Mississippi to find the time-honored Democratic party there resolved into a mere Secession faction, and to have painful assurance given me that no man could any longer support his long-cherished principles upon the soil of Mississippi, in opposition to the behests of shallow and selfish factionists, without finding himself denounced as a political changeling, an eccentric, a madman, and a dotard; and in the face of all this I could well have smiled, had I not feared that those by whom such epithets were so unkindly applied would themselves in the end be fated to suffer almost beyond human tolerance as the natural consequence of their own delusion and folly. No man, I assert confidently, has ever loved the people of the State of Mississippi more than I have done. They are, in the main, an intelligent, high-spirited, and liberty-loving people. My heart has often bled over the sufferings they have been compelled to endure since last I had an opportunity of raising a warning voice in their midst in reference to the manifold and perhaps remediless evils into which the maniacal counsels of others have so wofully betrayed them; of men who have nearly all already gone down to dishonorable graves, or who survive as wretched monuments of public contempt and ridicule. I trust not to be suspected of insincerity when I declare that I yet love the Mississippi of to-day, dressed as she is, in the sight of the whole world, in the garments of humiliation and sorrow, far more than I did the same Mississippi in the days of her palmy prosperity and power. I do most profoundly commiserate those troubles which, alas! it is not at all in my power to alleviate. My mind often reverts to scenes which had their progress in that far-off sunny region in former years, and a few more of these I now propose to call up for the consideration of those who shall honor these Reminiscences with a transient notice

In the year 1831 the somewhat memorable administration of Governor A. G. McNutt reached its termination. He was succeeded in the office which he had for four years occupied by an individual of very different temper and character. I allude to Governor Tucker, who was a man of sound and vigorous intellect, of a chastened and moderate ambition, and of a lofty independence worthy of all praise. The discussions which had taken place in the canvass preceding Governor Tucker's election had been of a nature calculated not a little to gall the sensibilities of Governor McNutt, and mortify his pride. Governor Tucker had taken the ground that his immediate predecessor, in subscribing and causing to be sold the bonds of the State for the purpose of bringing the Union Bank into existence, had exceeded his constitutional authority, and made himself responsible for evils under the experience of which the people of the State were even then audibly groaning. Without going at this moment into the merits of a question at that time much and warmly controverted on both sides of the Atlantic, it is sufficient to say that Governor McNutt, though himself vehemently opposed to the payment of these same bonds, and ambitious to enhance his popularity as much as possible by the agitation of the question of their repudiation, was yet by no means pleased with the frank and outspoken manner in which Governor Tucker had undertaken to allude to the facts which fixed upon him the chief responsibility of their issue and negotiation. Governor Tucker, therefore, on coming into office, very soon found Governor McNutt exceedingly hostile to him, and inclined to cast as many impediments as he could in the way of his administration. This was truly an embarrassing state of affairs; for Governor McNutt, who was one of the best haters I ever knew, and who, I am sure, was never known to forgive any human being that had ever

done him injury of any kind, very soon made it evident that he was far from intending to confine his opposition to unkind and sneerful remarks upon his official acts, and that he had resolved to do what he could to array against him and his administration several leading Democratic newspapers, the conductors of which had long recognized him as a sort of political oracle. It is needless now to speculate as to what precise motives influenced Governor McNutt in pursuing the course which has just been described. It may have been in part owing to his desire to hold under his permanent control the party machinery of every kind which he had been for several years permitted to wield with unresisted sway, together with the fear which he entertained that Governor Tucker could not be induced to favor his election to the United States Senate, which position it was already well known he was confidently expecting to reach. It is probable that he was, at least in part, actuated by feelings of personal ill-will toward the just-minded and truly patriotic man who had now succeeded him. Certain it is, that Governor Tucker had hardly been inaugurated before the storm of persecution began to rage. A dozen little newspapers, known to be completely under Governor McNutt's influence, were perpetually pouring forth their ill-natured complaints against the Governor then in office, and endeavoring in every way effectually to break down his public character. Nor did his private reputation altogether escape their animadversion; and, indeed, all persons officially connected with him, or who presumed in a public manner to express their disapproval of this wholly unprovoked warfare, had to come in for their share of opprobrium and ridicule.

By far the most intellectual and accomplished of those who had enlisted in this terrible war of defamation was an individual who was then resident in Vicksburg, and who was there occupying the editorial tripod of a paper

called *The Sentinel*. This gentleman I had known quite familiarly long before he had located in the State of Mississippi, and my relations with him, though not those of close andconfidential intimacy, had been uniformly marked with mutual civility and kindness. Dr. James Hagan was in many respects a very remarkable man. He was born in Ireland, had been thoroughly educated at the University of Dublin, and, after attaining manhood, had been an unremitted reader of books, so as to have become a man of great and varied knowledge. His pen had been kept in almost constant exercise for many years, in consequence of which he had acquired a style of composition at once clear, polished, vigorous, and flowing. He chiefly delighted in satire and ridicule, and in both of these he was most potential. He was exceedingly ambitious of notoriety, and a little reckless of truth and justice when he thought he had it in his power to exercise his powers of detraction upon some individual of established reputation and of known influence, whom less aspiring contributors to the newspaper press did not deem it altogether prudent to assail. He located himself, about the year 1829 or 1830, in the little village of Occoquan, in the State of Virginia, and here, I believe, had for some time practiced the profession of medicine. While thus sojourning at a point only a few miles distant from the residence of one of the most celebrated and accomplished men that Virginia has ever produced—Judge Alexander G. Dade—he, in some way, got knowledge of the fact that this gentleman, and several of the judges of the general court of the State besides, had been in the habit for several years of making their annual journey to Richmond by *water*, instead of proceeding thither by a much shorter land route, and of charging mileage for the whole number of miles which they had to travel along the Potomac, the Chesapeake bay, and the river James. Dr. Hagan re-

solved to ventilate this matter, and he did so in a series of the most cutting articles I ever read. Judge Dade attempted to respond to his objurgatory criticisms, but, notwithstanding his high abilities, was most decidedly worsted in the conflict. This affair gave Dr. Hagan much *éclat*, and he resolved to seek a wider theater for the display of his extraordinary powers. I saw him myself for the first time in the summer of 1836, at one of the hotels in Washington. He sought my acquaintance, and we soon fell into an animated conversation upon the questions involved in the Presidential election of that period. The Doctor then professed a warm admiration of Mr. Calhoun, and of the extreme State-rights theory, of which Mr. Calhoun was the most prominent expounder. He was bitterly opposed to Mr. Van Buren, and assailed him with much severity in this interview. We talked for several hours with much heat and acrimony on both sides, but without any decided approach to a personal quarrel. When I next met with him he had taken up his residence in Vicksburg, where he soon after assumed that vocation to which a few years subsequent he unfortunately fell a victim.

No such editorial writer as Doctor Hagan had ever before appeared in the State of Mississippi, and Governor McNutt was shrewd enough to discern at once that it might facilitate the accomplishment of his own views of individual ambition very much if he could in some way manage to conciliate this rising genius. What he did for this purpose I have never precisely ascertained, but it is certain that Dr. Hagan, despite some noted differences between himself and Governor McNutt, upon several political questions of great importance, became in process of time completely devoted to that personage, and the *Sentinel* was by all recognized as Governor McNutt's veritable political organ. The manifold corruptions of the banking system then existing in Mississippi opened to Doctor

Hagan a rich and inviting field for the exercise of his peculiar talents. For several years he attacked with great bitterness the acts and characters of those whom he judged to be chiefly responsible for the financial evils then sorely oppressing all classes of the people. Every now and then he issued a bulletin against Centralism, of which he seemed to stand in the greatest dread. His strictures upon the conduct of individuals in conspicuous social position attracted remarkable attention, and the withering severity of his satiric allusions to persons whose apparent prosperity was calculated of itself to awaken envy in ignoble bosoms naturally constituted him a very Corypheus of the suffering population. I do not think that any other editor that this country has produced has been known with impunity to indulge, for so long a space of time, as freely as Dr. Hagan, in language of the harshest personal invective. His newspaper had actually become an object of mingled dread and hatred to large numbers of peace-loving and law-respecting people all over the Southwestern States. It was sought for everywhere with eagerness, and was read with the utmost interest by thousands and tens of thousands all over the country. I had been in constant apprehension for several months anterior to his tragic end that the patient forbearance with which his terrible diatribes had been so long tolerated would soon give place to feelings of fiery resentment on the part of some high-spirited citizen, and perhaps to some attempt at a desperate and bloody revenge. I therefore visited Vicksburg just ten days before Dr. Hagan's demise, and remonstrated with him in the most solemn and earnest manner against the further pursuance of that course of sweeping revilement in which he had been for several years engaged, and which I ventured to assure him could only be productive in the end of great mischief, as well to the public as to himself. I brought to his attention the fact

that his abilities were of so high a cast that he could have no difficulty whatever in reaching the loftiest position of civil dignity if he would but pay more regard to the rules of social decorum and the laws of a high-bred courtesy. He confessed very frankly the soundness of my admonitory suggestion, and declared to me with much apparent feeling that he had several times resolved upon conducting his paper in a manner more civil and kindly, but that he had found the outside pressure upon him for the preparation of articles of a fiercely denunciatory character too strong to be resisted.

After this interview I saw him no more. When Governor Tucker had been nominated for the high executive office which he afterward so worthily filled, an individual was associated with him upon the State Democratic ticket as a candidate for the responsible office of Treasurer, in support of whom I found myself not able to vote without incurring the loss of my own self-respect. His name was Graves. I had long known him as an unscrupulous demagogue, and I was satisfied that, if elected to the position of Treasurer, some great act of official treachery would infallibly ensue. I was, indeed, so fully persuaded of the danger of electing this miscreant that I did not hesitate to warn my neighbors and fellow-citizens, and in the plainest language, of the mischief likely to arise from their giving him their support in opposition to the worthy individual, Dr. Curtis, (now a respected citizen of California,) whom the Whigs had nominated on their party ticket. Party allegiance, though, was too strong to be overcome by reason or considerations of patriotism, so Mr. Graves was foisted upon the State treasury. There he had not been more than a week or two before he was able to project a scheme of fraud of which there are but few parallels in the history of any country. A large amount of the money of the State, deposited in his keep-

ing, was dexterously abstracted and applied to his own use. So soon as the discovery of his misconduct in this affair was made, Governor Tucker took the most prompt measures, alike to save the State from further pecuniary loss and to bring this enormous malefactor to justice. An accomplished and venerable jurist, the late George W. Adams, was employed to aid the Attorney General in the institution of a suit in chancery, and, at the instance of certain public-spirited citizens, I agreed to co-operate with the same officer in the commencement of appropriate criminal proceedings. The dignity of the case was such that we determined to demand of the Chief Justice of the State, the Hon. William L. Sharkey, to act as a Court of Inquiry, and before this learned and upright officer for several days we were diligently arraying the testimony against the accused, when, on a certain Sabbath day, (the court having adjourned over until Monday,) the wife of the accused having been humanely allowed to visit him, he adroitly exchanged vestments with her, and made his escape to parts unknown.

Meanwhile the chancery suit spoken of was in active progress. Governor Tucker had paid Judge Adams for his invaluable services therein out of the contingent fund of the State the very moderate fee of five hundred dollars.

So soon as this transaction became known at Vicksburg, where Governor McNutt chanced to be at the moment, an article appeared in the columns of the *Sentinel*, headed "More Stealing in Jackson," in which both Governor Tucker and Judge Adams were mentioned in terms of the coarsest and most insulting crimination. It is not probable that either of these upright personages would have felt called upon to notice this attack, which in truth could not possibly have done either of them the smallest permanent detriment. But it happened that Daniel W.

Adams, a young and high-spirited son of Judge Adams, who had returned home from college only a day or two previously, got sight of this article in the *Sentinel* before its appearance had become known to his father, and excited, as it was but natural he should be, to the highest pitch of indignation, he proceeded at once to Vicksburg in order to seek atonement for the outrage which had been perpetrated. He did not know Dr. Hagan personally, but he had heard that he was a singularly brave and determined man: that he generally went armed, and that he had before that time been uniformly successful in the various conflicts in which he had been engaged. On reaching Vicksburg this deeply-aggrieved and highly-enraged young man went immediately in pursuit of Dr. Hagan. He found him returning from a dinner-party, owing to which fact, most probably, he was for the moment unarmed; of which state of things, though, it was impossible that Adams should have been apprised. He accosted Hagan, and inquired of him whether he was the editor of the *Sentinel*, which paper he then held in his hand. On being answered in the affirmative he called his attention to the offensive article in relation to his father, and demanded an immediate *retractit* of it. Dr. Hagan made no reply, but rushed upon young Adams, seized him strongly by the waist, and quickly prostrated him upon the earth. Adams could not but then regard his situation as one of great peril. He had been overcome in the struggle which had just taken place. In falling violently to the ground his eyes had been filled with dust, and he had every reason to apprehend that Hagan, who yet held him firmly in his grasp, would, in a second or two, either cut his throat or blow out his brains. Under these circumstances he did just what I presume every man of adequate presence of mind would do if similarly situated: he drew one of his own pistols from his bosom, reached

up to the back part of Hagan's head, placed in contact with it the muzzle of the pistol, and fired. Hagan received the contents of the pistol in the cerebellum, and immediately expired.

When Adams had succeeded in releasing himself from the grasp of his now exanimate antagonist and had risen to his feet, he found himself surrounded by a very excited crowd. When asked who had slain Hagan he replied at once that he had done so, alleging that he had only used violence in defense of his own person and life, and proceeded to deliver himself up for judicial examination. When this examination took place he was allowed to give bail for his appearance at the next Circuit Court of Warren county; where an indictment for murder having been found against him he demanded, through his counsel, a change of venue to the county of Hinds; and, in a month or two after, he was tried in presence of a vast assemblage of citizens, and honorably acquitted of the charge which had been brought against him. I must necessarily have been familiar with all the facts in this extraordinary case, as I was one of the attorneys engaged in Adams' defense. I was aided on the occasion by two very distinguished advocates—the late George Yerger and the late John I. Guion. The district attorney did not prosecute alone, two lawyers of some standing having been employed to assist him. It is rather a curious fact that one of these last-mentioned attorneys, whose name was Brennan, about a year afterward, came to my office one day in order to obtain my professional services in a case of his own which had just arisen for judicial cognizance. He had slain an aged negro man whom he had in his employment, and under circumstances of the most aggravated character. Much local excitement had been engendered, and, from his own account of the matter, I was satisfied that, if tried, nothing could save him from the scaffold but per-

jury in the jury box. I at once told Mr. Brennan frankly that his case was beyond remedy; that no lawyer could defend him successfully without resorting to expedients altogether outside of my own professional experience. He readily took the hint, and at once fled from that part of the world; since which time I have never heard of him.

Young Adams, in a few months after the termination of his trial, commenced a most brilliant and successful career as a lawyer in the city of Jackson, whence he afterward removed to New Orleans. While yet in Mississippi, though, he became a member of the State Senate, and took a very leading part in connection with the present distinguished Governor Alcorn and others in defeating the scheme of secession, then in active progress. How it happened, and at what precise period it was, that he was persuaded to take part in the late civil war on the side of the Confederate States I am not prepared to explain. But I can confidently avouch that a braver, more honorable, and generous-hearted gentleman I have never known, and that he possessed intellectual gifts which, had he lived long enough, under circumstances at all propitious, must have inevitably secured to him the highest honors of his profession. After receiving many and grievous wounds in fiercely-contested battles during the late war, at its termination General Adams located for a short period in the city of New York, where he is understood to have made a highly-favorable impression. He subsequently returned to his old domicil in the city of New Orleans, where a year or two since he deceased very suddenly, and, as I have been told, while engaged in drafting some important judicial paper.

After having been employed in the defense of General Adams I had the honor to be invited to deliver a funeral eulogy upon Dr. Hagan, and I agreed to do so should the performance of this duty be insisted on, but took

the occasion to allege that my position as counsel in opposition to the prosecution then pending I thought would make it proper that the task proposed should be devolved on some one else. I do not know what afterward occurred in this matter.

I have never heard of a newspaper other than the *Sentinel* which stood so connected with tragic occurrences of one kind or another. After the decease of Dr. Hagan, a Mr. Rian became its editor. He was, in a few months, slain in a duel by Mr. Hammet, of the Vicksburg *Whig*. A third editor, Captain Hickey, slew Dr. Maclin in a street-fight, growing out of some newspaper publication. Dr. James Fall, while superintending the management of the same paper, had to draw trigger twice in vindication, as he supposed, of his right of free thought and speech. Mr. Jenkins, who was the editor of the *Sentinel* in 1848, and whom I had known most favorably from the days of his early boyhood, fell in deadly conflict with Mr. Crabb, (also known to me for many years and highly respected,) as the result of a political quarrel which had occurred the night before at a public meeting, where I chanced to be one of the speakers. A Mr. Roy experienced a similar fate while engaged in an exciting editorial career in the same city, and not long after his paper had come forth as a furious advocate of the reopening of the African slave trade!

The Mr. Crabb of whom I have spoken was the only son of that eminent jurist, Judge Crabb, of Tennessee, who, before he was thirty years of age, had become recognized as a lawyer of most remarkable learning and ability, and who, although he died in his thirty-fourth year, left behind him a reputation for judicial ability and uprightness seldom acquired even in a long lifetime of unremitting study and labor. Of his remarkable son, who, by a singular coincidence, died also in his thirty-fourth year, I

have a few special remarks now to make. After the unfortunate conflict with Mr. Jenkins, already mentioned, had become the subject of judicial examination, and he had been honorably discharged, he removed to the State of California. There I found him on my arrival in that far-off region in the year 1854, a prominent member of the State Senate. His reputation for political ability was very high, and he had acquired a general popularity to which few men besides could justly lay claim. He married an amiable and accomplished Mexican lady, who had been born in the State of Sonora, and whose father and other relatives possessed large estates there of which they had been unjustly and cruelly deprived by the tyranny of a political faction bearing rule then in Sonora, from whose violence they had been forced to take refuge in California. Under these circumstances it was but natural that a man of Colonel Crabb's bold and enterprising temper should seek to reinstate his friends and relatives in the enjoyment of the rights of which they had been so lawlessly despoiled.

In point of fact, he got up an association of young gentlemen in California, with a view to making an armed descent upon the State of Sonora, which was very near being completely successful. He had previously visited that region and effected an alliance with a strong body of the native inhabitants there, which would have been able to effect a complete civil revolution, but for the happening of one or two events presently to be narrated. Colonel Crabb, who was one of the Fillmore electors in California, in the year 1856, lingered so long in this interesting field of operations that his allies in Sonora, despairing of his coming, became reconciled to the Mexican Government. It seems that in order to secure their own impunity they had to promise that if Colonel Crabb and his California associates should thereafter reach So-

nora they would manage to betray them into the hands of the Government, and thus aid in making them the subjects of exemplary vengeance. Of this state of things Colonel Crabb and his confiding friends—most of whom I knew personally—had no intimation. I saw the Colonel only a few days before he left California for the theater of his expected operations. He was in fine spirits, full of hope as to the future, and in the enjoyment of almost exuberant physical health. When he reached the frontiers of Sonora he was deluded into a conference with his former confederates which he had every reason to suppose to be one of a perfectly amicable character. He and his whole party were, in a few minutes, seized upon and mercilessly put to death! *Horresco referens!* The agonizing news soon reached California not only that this once promising expedition had signally failed, but that the head of the lamented Crabb had been amputated after death and placed in a large glass vessel filled with spirits of wine, with the intention of exhibiting it to the representatives of the Mexican Government, in proof that this nefarious scheme of treachery had been consummated, and that his diabolical murderers had thus faithfully executed their hideous compact of perfidy!

It can not but be viewed as a somewhat curious and impressive coincidence that the celebrated William Walker, whose extraordinary career awakened so much interest at one time in every part of the civilized world as "The Grey-eyed Man of Destiny," and who underwent so dreadful a fate afterward in Honduras, was, like Crabb, a native of the "City of Rocks," Nashville, where, by many worthy people, both of these famous personages are yet held in high esteem, and over whose sad end many sincere tears have been shed. Walker and Crabb were for many years intimate and devoted friends, though in some important points of character they were wholly unlike. Peace to the ashes of both these young heroes!

REMINISCENCE No. XXXV.

DAVIS—BRAGG—NEPOTISM—HINDMAN'S BRUTALITIES.

I feel called upon to recite one or two miscellaneous facts not heretofore recorded. These particulars would have been passed by but for certain recent indiscreet movements of Mr. Davis, which have been already alluded to.

It is not only surprising, but is even not a little ridiculous that this personage should now attempt to revive the feelings of rancor arising from the late war in the manner which has been heretofore noticed, when it is a well-known and undeniable fact that the Confederate Congress was compelled, several weeks before Mr. Davis' precipitate and inglorious flight from Richmond, to strip him of all his control of the military forces then warring for Southern independence, and to deposit the exclusive management of its armies in the hands of that able, patriotic, and high-souled commander, General Robert E. Lee. Mr. Davis' silly and blustering attempt to nullify, by his usurping manifesto from Danville, a few days after the surrender of General Lee, that needed and judiciously-concluded arrangement, though quite in character, was perhaps the most disgusting specimen of official rhodomontade to which even the American Don Quixote and his meek and obedient squire, Sancho Panza Benjamin, had ever given vent. There is really nothing more gravely amusing in any of the scenes of adventure which marked the romantic career of the "Knight of the Rueful Countenance" than this same Parthian missive, dispatched by the ex-President and his scampering Secretary of State, when preparing to resume that ominous flight beyond the great

"Father of Waters," especially considering the fact that by the fiat of a once over-observant Congress he had been fixed in a state of most disgraceful political "Coventry," at least so far as all future military movements were concerned. Mr. Davis certainly acted far more in conformity with his then politically *emasculated* condition when, a few days thereafter, he so adroitly donned the traveling garments of some one of the gentler sex, and attempted to make his escape from the military pursuers, then close upon his heels, with bonnet on head and huge India-rubber wrapper investing his slender and wire-drawn membral appendages, almost reminding one of Falstaff's grotesque simulation of the now world-renowned nurse of Brentford. This puny effort at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs to set afloat the absurd idea that General Lee and Joe Johnston were "cheated" into a dishonorable surrender by the two over-cunning Union commanders with whom they had to deal, is obviously designed not only to bring discredit upon these two valiant and efficient Confederate officers, but to suggest the idea in addition that, had he not been so injudiciously deprived of his executive chieftainship, the Confederate States would long since have attained the objects for which they had for four disastrous and blood-marked years so energetically contended. In this point of view Mr. Davis' maniacal outpouring at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs the other day may be well regarded as a sort of long-withheld protest against the Congressional act which stripped him of his military insignia and turned him out plumeless upon the world, somewhat after the manner of the jackdaw when deprived of the peacock's feathers in which he had so ostentatiously arrayed himself.

There are many things which were done and said by Mr. Davis in Richmond during his memorable career there which have, for certain reasons, not been heretofore

ventilated, but of which his present efforts to disturb the public quiet and drag the South into a renewed experience of evils from which she is now just beginning to recover seems to me to demand a frank and full exposure, in order to the counteraction of his yet cherished ambitious designs, and of opening even the eyes of all those of the feminine gender in the South who chance, as he boasts, to remain yet "unreconstructed." Seven years ago, in a hastily-written but strictly impartial work upon the events of the late civil war, I thus forbearingly spoke of Mr. Davis, and of others particularly connected with him, while he was playing the part of self-constituted Dictator in Richmond:

"In reference to the proceedings of the Confederate Government, after my unhappy and tempestuous connection with it was formed, I should have very much to say under different circumstances from those which now exist, all of which may be said hereafter if it shall become apparent that the public mind has attained a condition in which it will be able to profit by the painful revelations which it will be in my power to make. But President Davis and his Cabinet are at this moment either in exile or in imprisonment; his multitudinous official servitors have retired to private life, or are gloomy wanderers in foreign lands. Those who, in despite of what a few independent and high-spirited men could do to prevent the passage of certain baleful measures, succeeded in enacting laws for the suspension of the great writ of liberty; for the confiscation of the estates of all who could not conscientiously range themselves in opposition to the flag of their fathers; for the conscription of all male citizens capable of bearing arms, whether in friendly or hostile relations to the Confederate cause; for the forcible impressment of private property, wheresoever situated, at the discretion of men temporarily endowed with military authority; for the declaration and enforcement of martial law; and a number of acts besides of almost equal enormity; those who sustained Mr. Davis in the appointment of inefficient and mischievous officials, to the exclusion of the capable and the virtuous; who sanctioned the impolitic and ungenerous displacement of able and high-souled military commanders, in order to make way for others whom the army despised, and the citizens at large both distrusted and hated—these persons, the valueless ephemera of an age fertile in inanities have nearly all disappeared from

the jostling, chaotic stage whereupon they were severally enacting their parts, and

"'Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Left not a wreck behind.'

"As to Mr. Davis, I must say that I regard him mainly as the unfortunate victim of dark and dangerous political heresies, for which he is by no means primarily responsible, a victim, likewise, of the intriguing machinations of cunning and unscrupulous managers, whose true character he was not capable of penetrating; as the dupe of adulation and false promises from abroad which might perchance have deceived men far more sagacious than himself; in fine, as the almost involuntary instrument of dark and potential influences generated in the womb of revolution, which led him to claim and exercise powers, the employment of which, though utterly subversive of freedom, he may possibly have believed to be indispensable to the successful execution of the grand scheme of secession and Cæsarism to which he had for so many years devoted the best energies of his soul and understanding. Far be it from me to wish evil to the late President of the Confederate States. He has been unfortunate, and I condole with him; he has committed great and grievous errors, and I make all just allowance for them; he is unhappy, and I sympathize with him; he is in prison, and I pray night and day for his enlargement. Though he permitted his heartless Secretary of War last winter to deprive me of my own personal liberty and to retain me in 'durance vile' until I was discharged on *habeas corpus*, alone on account of my struggling for pacification when I found both Congress and himself bent on the further prosecution of a war which they had themselves already rendered hopeless; yet, so far from feeling resentment or unkindness on this account, I can say with truth that, having myself thrice suffered the loss of personal liberty within the last twelve months, I can, in reference to Mr. Davis' present forlorn and suffering condition, painfully and sorrowingly exclaim (with a slight change of the immortal words of Virgil) in the language of Queen Dido to Æneas,

'Non ignarus mali, miseris succurrere disco.'"

I should have been glad had Mr. Davis left those who sincerely condemned his conduct in Richmond an opportunity of being silent over many of his short-comings and shameless violations of principle. But as he has chosen again to bring himself forward as a fomenter of mischief, and as all his silly and slavish adulators seem not yet to have become ashamed of their former close affiliation

with him, I shall now drag into distinct notice several dishonoring particulars which it would be but a foolish liberality to allow longer to remain in concealment.

Only a day or two before I left Richmond, in the autumn of 1864, Mr. Fowle, a considerable merchant there, visited me for the purpose of calling attention to a matter which he conceived to be of the greatest importance. He assured me that for some months past it had been the practice of the Naval Department to send out of the ports of the Confederate States large orders to commercial cities abroad for the best wines, brandies, silks, and other things needful for the supply of persons of luxurious taste; that these commodities were purchased with the money of the public treasury, along with supplies for the Confederate soldiery, and that whenever a fresh supply of the articles came in there was a formal assemblage in the Naval Department of the female heads of certain official families, including that of Mr. Davis himself, among whom, and their special friends and favorites, all these nice things were apportioned, and at the very low prices which had been paid for them abroad.

Mr. Fowle assured me that this evil practice was greatly injuring the merchants of Richmond, and besought me to bring it at once to the notice of the Confederate Congress. A day or two subsequent, Colonel Orr, a Congressional Representative from Mississippi, (a brother of the late worthy Minister to Russia, and a gentleman of as much honor and intelligence as was then in Richmond,) came to my seat in the House of Representatives and besought me to introduce a resolution of inquiry on this subject. He assured me that he had himself looked carefully into the matter, and had found the facts above stated to be true to the letter. I consented to introduce a resolution of inquiry in regard to this affair, provided Colonel Orr would put his statement in writing, which he did.

I chanced not to remain long enough thereafter in Richmond to prosecute the investigation of this matter to a close, but I have never doubted that the information given me by Mr. Fowle and Colonel Orr was in all respects correct. If so, what are men to think of Mr. Davis' boasted disinterestedness and integrity, and of those of his Cabinet counselors?

About twelve months before the fall of Richmond Congress passed a bill raising each of the adjutants in attendance upon major generals in service to the dignity of major. The subject had been much considered and most deliberately acted on. So soon as Congress adjourned Mr. Davis, imitating the well-known example of James II of England, suspended the operation of the law, thus committing precisely such an act of tyrannic usurpation as cost the King of England referred to the loss of his throne. There has never been a time when such a proceeding as this would not have caused the immediate impeachment of a President of the United States. What made the conduct of Mr. Davis in regard to this matter still more disgusting was the fact that, Sunday after Sunday, a son of our august Confederate Imperator, not above fourteen years of age, appeared in Mr. Davis' pew at church, by the paternal side, dressed up in a Confederate major's uniform, without his ever having seen a single day or hour of military service in his life.

There has been much rather silly talk at one time in this country on the subject of *nepotism*. I assert that the grossest and most shameless acts of nepotism that the world has ever seen were constantly occurring during the short and stormy reign of Jefferson the First in Richmond. I do not think that there was a single male relative, either of Mr. Davis or his wife, to be found in any part of the Confederate States, that was not given official advancement of some kind or other, and in some instances under cir-

cumstances of the grossest indelicacy and injustice. But this theme is really too nauseating to be dwelt upon.

It was formally proposed during the first year of the war that the cotton of the Confederate States in private ownership should be bought by the Government. Every bale of it was then purchasable at ten or twelve cents per pound, payable in Confederate paper. This proposition was scoffingly rejected by Mr. Davis and that profound fiscal economist, Memminger, his Secretary of the Treasury, on the ridiculous and untenable ground that this sort of traffic would transform the awful government at Richmond into a wretched broker's office. At the end of about two years these gentlemen came to their senses on this all-important subject, and commenced buying cotton all over the land, for which they had to pay, at least, a dollar a pound. Thereby hangs a tale of enormous illicit profits, which the public is not likely to hear told very shortly.

The insane project of burning all the cotton of the South, in order to keep it out of the hands of the enemy, is understood to have originated in Mr. Davis' own teeming cranium. It is a little remarkable, though, that while so many suffered so ruinously by the destruction of their cotton in this way, the crops of Mr. Jefferson Davis and of his brother Joseph are understood, in some mysterious way, to have escaped the devouring flames.

I have heretofore brought to notice the fact that large proceeds arising from the sales of the cotton of the Confederate Government were understood to be in the city of Liverpool when the war was brought to an end. I hope that Mr. Davis and the historiographer, whoever he may be, that had the honor to be selected the other day to compose the first truthful and impartial history of the war "from Southern material," will condescend to give to the world some explanation of what has become of this

large amount of money, and also what became of the $200,000 in gold which I assert, and can prove, to have been taken across the ocean from Canada after the end of the war by Jacob Thompson, Mr. Davis' once-accredited agent. Did Mr. Thompson keep the whole of this money, or did the yet "unreconstructed" ex-Emperor of the South get his share? And is it in this way that we are to account for the mysterious suspension of that generous project set on foot in the city of Richmond a few years ago for raising a large sum of money from the distressed and ruined people of the South for the purpose of rewarding Mr. Davis for his Washington-like services to a generous-minded but, I fear, a too easily deluded people?

Perhaps the most cruel and atrocious conduct perpetrated by any of President Davis' military servitors during the war was that practiced by his especial favorite, General Hindman, in the State of Arkansas. I have formerly asserted, and my assertion has never yet been denied, nor can it be, that "this person, as his own formal report to the War Department evidenced, finding, as he said, that the very comprehensive provisions of the conscription law were not quite comprehensive enough to suit his purposes, deliberately amplified them by proclamation; declared martial law throughout Arkansas and the northern portion of Texas, and demanded the services of all whom he had thus lawlessly embraced in his wide-sweeping conscription list. All who refused to obey his mandate, as he in terms confesses, were apprehended, subjected to trial by a military court, appointed by Hindman himself; and when convicted, as a good many of them were, of an offense which he himself unblushingly acknowledges in this same official report was wholly unknown to the law of the land, he had them all executed; and going even beyond the example of the infernal Jeffreys himself in barbarity, he (as he also most ostentatiously declares, in

the same report) took care to be personally present, that he might witness the dying agonies of his unfortunate victims. This man seized upon all the cotton and other property for which he had use, (as he boldly avows,) burned some, retained some, and appropriated a third portion to such purposes as he pleased. His cruelties were so enormous in Arkansas that it became unsafe that he should remain there longer, when he was brought across the Mississippi river under order of the Confederate War Department, made president of a court of inquiry for the trial of General Lovell, and, after having made such a report as was deemed to be necessary to the shielding of certain officials in Richmond from blame in connection with the capture of New Orleans, was immediately thereafter put in command of one of the largest divisions in the army of Tennessee, where he remained snug and comfortable until, running into collision with a more potential presidential favorite, the well-beloved Bragg, he was quietly relieved from command. I exposed all the enormity of this fiend in human form in open session of the Confederate Congress on more than one occasion, and took pains to have my exposition put in print, and yet I could not persuade Mr. Davis or Mr. Seddon to take the slightest notice of these outrageous enormities.

This is the proper place to give some special attention to this same General Bragg. This military commander first set the example of proclaiming martial law, which he did repeatedly and upon the most flimsy pretexts. I assert what I know to be true, and what I charged to be true on more than one occasion, and what I stand now fully prepared to establish on proof, that General Bragg did deliberately put to death on repeated occasions, without a shadow even of Confederate legal authority, as meritorious soldiers as he had under his command, and for one of the most revolting instances of this kind which oc-

curred I can confidently rely upon the authority of General Buckner, from whose own lips I learned the particulars. He evinced on all occasions while he commanded the army of Tennessee an utter disregard of all the established principles of constitutional freedom, committed such excesses as a Sylla or a Marius would almost have recoiled from, and yet, in spite of all that could be done, his removal from command could not be effected until the Confederate cause had become well-nigh hopeless. On one occasion, in company with a majority of the Tennessee Senators and Representatives, I joined in demanding the removal of General Bragg, and the substitution in his place of General Joseph E. Johnston. A written communication had been addressed to the Confederate President requesting an interview with him, and asking that it might be a private one. Mr. Davis had consented to see us at a particular hour at his office. We were received with sufficient politeness, but we presently perceived that Mr. Hunter, of Virginia, and Mr. Barnwell, of South Carolina, were also present. I addressed these gentlemen civilly, and suggested to them that as they seemed to have precedence over us we would withdraw until their particular business should be dispatched. To this they answered: "No, it is unnecessary," and took their seats, between a large table and the wall, near enough to hear all that might go on. Our interview was a very brief one. Mr. Davis gave us to understand that the change which we demanded should be made, and he even went so far as to present to our view a book purporting to contain a copy of the telegrams he had sent off that day, from which it appeared that he had already issued the order for which we asked. This, by-the-by, was not done; and from subsequent facts I am satisfied that he had never entertained the least thought of parting with Bragg at all. I recollect that Major Gustavus Henry, one of the Tennessee

Senators, inquired of me, as we left the room, if I thought Mr. Hunter and Mr. Barnwell had been requested by Mr. Davis to remain in order to bear witness thereafter to what might occur. To this I answered that I could not undertake to decide so nice a point as this, but I considered that we had all been treated most disrespectfully, and that it was the last official visit I should ever pay to Mr. Davis. This surely needs no comment.

And now, with such facts as these staring us in the face, will any portion of our Southern people desire the restoration of Mr. Davis' tyrannic rule? Does any one wish to see renewed in any part of the land the reign of secession? Is it indeed true that any portion of the fair ladies of the South yet sympathize with this unscrupulous and daring adventurer? Do not all my long-suffering countrymen and countrywomen of the South at last see the necessity of their becoming at once cordially reconciled to the Government of their fathers? Will they not afford to that paternal Government a fair opportunity of exercising that magnanimity which belongs to its character? Or will they still maniacally cling to the accursed "flesh-pots of Egypt?"

REMINISCENCE No. XXXVI.

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND UNIVERSAL AMNESTY—HON. WILLIAM M. STEWART—ANDREW JOHNSON—GOVERNOR SHARKEY—ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.

When the recent four years' civil war was brought to a close one fact was exceedingly obvious to all mankind—African slavery in North America was dead, dead, dead, beyond all possibility of being resuscitated in all time to come! This overthrow of a system of unmixed evil had been long before and often thundered into the ears of dull-sighted and bigoted secession leaders by such men as Clay and Webster as the certain and inevitable result of the surrender of those constitutional guarantees which had alone and almost for a century protected slavery against the indignant hostility of an uprisen world. So far, indeed, were such one-idea men as John C. Calhoun, Jeff Davis, *et id omne genus*, from comprehending this, that they verily believed, and often ostentatiously announced in Congress and elsewhere, that the system of labor then existing in the South would never find itself established upon solid and irremovable foundations until a constitution for a separate Southern republic should be formed in which slavery would be made the chief and predominating ingredient. This constitution, as I have more than once mentioned, Mr. Calhoun professed to have already drawn up, and was ready to supervise its being put in happy and beneficent operation. But so far, in truth, was slavery from being strengthened and solidified by the war, projected and carried on in the begining for its extension and perpetuation, that even Mr. Davis was driven, during

the last year of that war, to recommend throwing all the able-bodied sons of Africa into the Confederate armies for the maintenance of those chains which four millions of men, women, and children were then wearing—on condition, though, that the happy few who were to be suddenly transformed into soldiers should be allowed to win their own emancipation by fighting for the permanent subjugation of all who should not take up arms. These notions seem all now to be so surpassingly stupid and impracticable that even those of us who had ocular and auricular evidence of the facts just stated must almost feel incredulous of what we distinctly recollect to be true.

When slavery was at last seen by all to be "in the tomb of the Capulets," it became necessary to determine without delay what should become of those who had been just redeemed from bondage. A far-sighted sagacity would long before have provided for this state of things by a system of *gradual emancipation*, accompanied by a suitable and well-digested system of general education. To have among us four millions of people *nominally* free, but in all the higher advantages of a state of freedom on an equality with the members of the brute creation, was manifestly to ordain the ultimate degradation and ruin of our whole forty millions of citizens. The moral and intellectual culture of the race so long held in subjection had become a great *national necessity*, perhaps even more important to the white race themselves than to those among whom the seeds of knowledge and refinement had now to be sown. If we desired to have social tranquillity, peaceable and friendly neighbors and fellow-Christians, instead of living in a state of perpetual proximity to ignorance and barbarism, to want and degraded profligacy—always on the increase—we had to provide for the emancipation of our former bondmen and bondwomen from a condition of mental and spiritual slavery far more torturing than

mere physical enthrallment. We had to do more. The necessity had come upon us of the South, springing from the eternal principles of justice, as well as a sound, statesmanlike policy, of doing all this ourselves for the safety and future advancement of a long-oppressed and suffering race, in order to conciliate them toward their former masters and mistresses, and keep these helpless ones out of the hands of a body of selfish and contriving managers with whom they were even then in daily and hourly contact, and who, if allowed to do so, would infallibly use them for their own selfish purposes, and set them permanently against those to whose control they had so long, under far different circumstances, quietly and unmurmuringly submitted. Carpet-bagism then was not an actual entity, but men of clear insight distinctly saw that there was, even at that time, a possibility of its future existence with all the unnamable horrors that wait thereupon.

The grave question was now immediately to arise: Are Southern men sufficiently relieved from the *prejudices* belonging to a system which has now forever passed away calmly and impartially to consider these matters, and cordially and without reserve to accept all the legitimate *results* of the war? There was one great difficulty in the way of their coming to sound conclusions concerning this momentous matter. It is time that the truth should be spoken boldly. There was an ancient party organization in the States of the North yet exhibiting some feeble signs of vitality, which Mr. Jefferson and others had always claimed to be the "natural ally of the South," and which in former days had rendered good service as the upholder of what were called Democratic principles, and as the supporter of that healthful spirit of *progress* then associated with the Democratic name and what yet remained of its primeval creed. Many of the leaders of this party in the North, it was known, had deeply sympa-

thized with the South in the struggle for independence which had just terminated. Some had even generously rushed to the sunny plains of the South, and fought there against the Union soldiers. This party had generally manifested its opposition to Mr. Lincoln's proclamation decreeing universal freedom. Though deeply discredited and demoralized, that party, then plainly degenerated into a mere spoils-loving faction, was yet unwilling to die. The newspapers of that party everywhere were unwilling to give up an organization which had in times past proved so *profitable* to them, and which, could it be thoroughly redintegrated, would, as they hoped, be yet equally prolific of the advantages of every kind which had been formerly enjoyed. Local demagogues, too, everywhere, depending alone upon party organization and a vicious system of party nomination for prospective power and dignity, still held on with tenacious grip to the rotten and shattered hull of the besmirched and shivered craft in which they had so long been navigating. With what face could such Democrats as I have been describing ask for admission into the Republican party of that time and become the open supporters of the *principles* of *progress* to which the war and its successful administration had given rise?

Such was the precise state of things when that wise and pure-minded patriot, Horace Greeley, startled the whole country by the enunciation of the sublime and all-comprehending proposition—*universal suffrage, coupled with universal amnesty.* Light seemed suddenly to break in upon the public mind, and to scatter in an instant the clouds of passion and prejudice which had so long enveloped it. Here was the restoration of that civic equality existing in the days of our fathers tendered to all the unhappy victims of the war; and that civic equality also which had been solemnly pledged in the season of war by the

Government itself to those from whose hands the shackles of serfdom had just been broken. The *equity* of this duplex proposition was just as obvious as was its *expediency*. But these words of wisdom and of true philanthropy spoken by the lamented Greeley had come first from the lips of a *Republican* leader. Other Republican leaders—Gerrit Smith; the then Governor of Massachusetts; and others who might be mentioned—had cordially welcomed Mr. Greeley's soul-cheering enunciation, and nothing could be plainer than that if universal amnesty and universal suffrage should, under such circumstances, be accorded by the North and accepted by the South, and thus the great work of national pacification be seen to go on under Republican auspices, there was an end forever of Democratic dignity and of Democratic influence, and a "new era of good feeling" and of general amity and brotherhood would be ushered in, to last for a few years at least; during which party strife and rancor would cease to inflame and irritate the whole popular mind of America.

It was in the spring of 1866 that I chanced to visit Washington city. Congress was in session, and the topics adverted to above were undergoing everywhere a free and animated discussion. One morning, on calling at the room of Mr. Stewart, one of the Senators from Nevada, he and I fell into conversation on this subject. I had several months before published a letter in the New York *Tribune* urging warmly upon the people of the South their prompt and cordial accession to Mr. Greeley's proposition. Several newspapers in that region of a decidedly conservative cast had republished my letter and given to it their approval. The Bourbon-Democratic presses of the South were as yet holding back, waiting for advice from the accredited organs of the Democratic party in New York and elsewhere before they ventured to say *pro* or *con* in

regard to a measure which they feared might disrupt the *organization* of that party which was so much dearer to them than their bleeding and distressed country.

Mr. Stewart asked me if I thought the States and people of the South would willingly accept the conditions of settlement tendered by Mr. Greeley. I answered that I was satisfied they *ought to do so;* that universal amnesty, coupled with universal suffrage, was all they were entitled to demand, and more than I had hoped for a month or two before. But I promptly expressed my opinion that party thraldom in the South was then so complete, and there was so much deference paid there to narrow-minded and ignorant partisan scribblers, and to the commands of selfish and unscrupulous party-managers, that unless the Democratic press in the North could be in some way liberalized and rendered more national and patriotic in its tone, it was to be feared that for the present, at least, my unhappy fellow-countrymen of the South would regard negro suffrage as a thing to which they ought never to think of submitting. I suggested, further, that there might be some difficulty on this point yet in the mind of President Johnson, who was evidently bent on carrying into operation, and by any means which he might find necessary to that end, his own peculiar policy of reconstruction, and I reminded Mr. Stewart also of the remarkable conversation which had occurred some time before between President Johnson and Frederick Douglass, in which the former had very scornfully declared that what he had always meant by making the slave *free* was the making him *free to labor*—urging at the same time that, should civil equality be given to the blacks, it would, as he believed, initiate a *war of races*—a shallow and unauthorized notion, altogether repugnant to the teachings of history. Mr. Stewart said that he had some hope that, if proper efforts were made, President Johnson could be

induced to co-operate cordially in the new movement, and told me that if I would remain in Washington one day more he would introduce a resolution on this subject in the Senate. He further told me he had reason to believe that Mr. Sumner would unite with him in support of such a resolution as that above alluded to, and that a telegram had been just received from the Governor of Massachusetts which committed that worthy and influential personage most fully in regard to this grave and interesting matter.

All this was highly encouraging to me, and I told Mr. Stewart that if he would draw up and offer his resolution that very day, I would see certain Senators, recently elected in the South, who were at that moment in Washington with a hope of being admitted in a day or two to their seats, but who thus far had not been permitted to qualify; naming of these gentlemen, particularly, Messrs. Stephens, Graham, and Sharkey; all of whom I told Mr. Stewart I thought would be willing to join in an assurance that his resolution, if adopted in Congress, would prove ultimately satisfactory to the people of their respective States. Mr. Stewart sat down to draft his resolution, and I went at once to call on Mr. Stephens and Judge Sharkey, both of whom I saw; and I regretted to find that Governor Graham, of North Carolina, had left town. Judge Sharkey told me at once that he warmly approved of what I was doing, and that if, on calling to see President Johnson and conversing with him, he should find things propitious in that quarter, he would at once declare, in a public and formal manner, his sanction of Mr. Stewart's resolution, and give it his hearty support, also, after his return to Mississippi. Judge Sharkey went at once to the White House, had an interview with President Johnson, and returned to the hotel, where I was impatiently awaiting his arrival. He told me that

he deeply regretted to find Mr. Johnson utterly opposed to endowing the negro with the right of suffrage, he insisting that it would inevitably result in a war of races, and added that he felt bound to adhere to Mr. Johnson, even in opposition to his own convictions, inasmuch as he had, as he thought, greatly risked himself for the relief of the South in her present suffering condition. I was exceedingly distressed to learn these facts, and I saw very plainly that there was not much probability of Mr. Stewart's pacificatory resolution being adopted while President Johnson continued to occupy his present attitude. Judge Sharkey several years after visited my own residence in Nashville, and took occasion to condemn President Johnson very strongly on account of the absurd and unaccommodating spirit displayed by him on that occasion, which he then agreed with me had been deeply prejudicial to the South and to the whole country.

My interview with Mr. Stephens was a very extraordinary one indeed. I placed before him the substance of the resolution which Mr. Stewart was about to offer. He told me frankly that he did not approve it; that he could never give his assent to negro suffrage; and he even called in question the validity of Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of freedom. I urged upon him the proposition that the measure of emancipation had been adopted as a *war measure*, and in that point of view I thought should be held valid. This he very politely but very vehemently denied, and I soon after left his lodgings fully persuaded that neither he nor his brother Senators from the South who had been knocking for admission at the doors of the Senate would ever be admitted until Congress should have guaranteed, in some effectual mode, the future safety and happiness of those whom they had so solemnly and repeatedly encouraged to look to them for *protection and support.*

The conduct of President Johnson in this instance was the more remarkable because he had a year before sent a telegram to Judge Sharkey, when this gentleman was acting in the capacity of Provisional Governor of Mississippi, in which he recommended, in the most emphatic manner, that the organic convention of that State should, in the new constitution which that body was about to frame, insert a clause providing for universal amnesty and universal suffrage, basing the latter, though, upon the standard of intelligence. "In this way," said this notable telegram, "you will take the wind out of the sails of your adversaries."

Mr. Stewart brought forward his resolution in the Senate, as he had agreed to do, and had the satisfaction, in a day or two, of finding himself most unkindly attacked by the editors of the New York *World*, who denounced the proposition offered by him as unjust and illiberal toward the South, and characterized Mr. Stewart himself as a bitter *Radical* on account of his having thus presumed to bring it forward.

Both the great political parties lately contending for ascendency in the Presidential election placed themselves upon the platform of universal amnesty and universal suffrage; the whole South acquiesced therein, and no one now deems it safe or politic to deny the civil equality of the races. And yet still is there some secret dissatisfaction fermenting in a few bosoms in regard to this once painfully disputed point; and it is evident, from the movements of certain political Bourbonites of the Democratic party (so called) in several of the populous States of the West, that if a particular class of antediluvian politicians, who are neither capable of learning anything new nor of forgetting anything old, are allowed to have their own way about this matter, they will yet throw us back at least six years in the history of the past; and

the men of *progress* will have to fight over again once more the great battle of *principle* which has so often already been fought and won.

How long will it be before our countrymen will everywhere learn that *party* does not mean *country*, and that a man may be a most spry and dextrous party leader without the smallest claim to be recognized as an enlightened and incorruptible patriot? How long shall men of sound sense and extended experience in the States of the South continue to look with something of an idolatrous reverence to the teachings of distant editors, who are directly interested in deceiving them, and whose innumerable blunders and inconsistencies have long since deprived them of all just claim to respect and consideration? How long will it continue to be the case that men of ability, of uprightness, and of known patriotism shall be distrusted and hated because of the falsehood and deceptious plausibility of those who smile but to betray, and who make professions of undying friendship only the more effectually to delude and injure those who are silly enough to seek their counsels and to give heed to their deceitful admonitions?

REMINISCENCE No. XXXVII.

CHIEF JUSTICE CHASE—JUSTICE SWAYNE.

A few days since, after having taken dinner at the house of a hospitable and valued friend, who dwells amid the cool and shady heights of Georgetown, I was easily persuaded to stroll during the cool and quiet hours of a Saturday afternoon through the grounds of the beautiful cemetery in that vicinage, where wealth and a delicate and refined taste have done so much to soften the inevitable horrors of death, and to impart needed consolation to the hearts of bereaved friends and relatives. I soon found myself standing in view of the freshly-made grave of one whom I had long and familiarly known in life, and between whom and myself the most unvarying harmony and friendship had ever subsisted, despite certain differences of opinion betwixt us upon questions once deemed of essential and vital import. While I was thus surveying the last resting-place of a man whose career had been so eminently marked with ability and virtue, and saw the flowers with which the hand of affection had so profusely bestrewn the earth which covered the mortal remains of Salmon P. Chase, now fast withering under the influence of a warm summer's sun, I could not but feel touchingly impressed with the vain and transitory character of all sublunary grandeur, and I inwardly repeated the memorable words of Mr. Burke: "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

It will appear, I am sure, surprising to none that, after leaving this sequestered and suggestive scene and returning to my own lonely lodgings, my mind fell into a train

of rumination, and became conscious of reminiscences which sought expression in such language as that which follows; in which will be found allusions to past occurrences, not altogether unmingled with speculations as to what may perchance take place hereafter, such as I hope may not prove altogether unentertaining to such as may honor these humble lucubrations with a cursory perusal.

All will admit that the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States is one of the greatest dignity and importance, and that the manifold and arduous duties connected therewith demand for their successful performance powers of intellect and traits of character rarely found united in any one individual. Surely no man could be judged worthy to occupy this exalted position who is not possessed of various and extended learning—who is not a vigorous and correct thinker—who is not as free as human nature can be expected to be from the domination of prejudice and passion of every kind—who is not a man of spotless and unquestioned integrity—whose habits of life are not marked with industry, sobriety, and a profound sense of responsibility to the Constitution and the laws, and to the people, for the promotion of whose welfare and happiness this Constitution and these laws have been ordained and established. Far be it from me to suggest that no man should be elevated to the office of Chief Justice of the United States who has never taken part in the scenes of political controversy, or whose opinions in regard to the gravest constitutional questions are wholly unknown. Under our system of government, it would be egregiously absurd to suppose that any individual will ever be found who shall at the same time have given satisfactory evidence of superior ability, and yet have avoided altogether the discussion of those questions which involve the prosperity and safety of the whole Republic. I am, moreover, free

to say that, in my opinion, any President of the United States would be justly held amenable to censure who should call to the office of Chief Justice a man whose constitutional opinions were not fully known to him; and I should vehemently doubt the *sincerity* of any Chief Magistrate who should nominate any man to a seat upon the Supreme Bench of the Union whose views of constitutional law were not in unison with those openly avowed by himself. Nobody now blames the elder Adams for calling John Marshall to preside over the deliberations of the highest judicial tribunal existing under Federal authority; nor is Jackson at this time complained of for nominating for the office of Chief Justice the lamented Roger B. Taney; and yet were both of these eminent personages zealous, outspoken, and influential partisan leaders anterior to their elevation to the Bench.

There is one proposition, the correctness of which I feel certain that no reasonable man will ever be heard to dispute, which is, that any given President is bound to do all in his power to find out the most suitable person in all respects to receive this high honor at his hands; and that when he shall have deliberately resolved to select such an individual for the place of Chief Justice, he is equally bound to send in his nomination to the Senate without the smallest regard to the illiberal scoffings or ridicule, either of those politically opposed to him, or to the protestations of selfish and intriguing factionists of his own particular party.

With these preliminary suggestions I will now proceed to the principal task which lies before me.

It was my fortune to come into social life in the bosom of a singularly virtuous and well-ordered community, and to have my first lessons of experience amid many of those who had been the immediate friends and neighbors of the venerated Washington and his illustrious compeers of

Revolutionary renown. The first American statesman who became familiarly known to me in early life was Chief Justice John Marshall, whose gravely benignant aspect, and whose simple and unaffected manners, are yet vividly pictured on my memory. Whilst a student of law in the well-known town of Warrenton, distant only about fifty miles from the city in which I write, I saw this remarkable man repeatedly. For many years of his eventful and most useful life he was accustomed to pay an annual visit to his native county of Fauquier, where he was the owner of a considerable landed estate, and where he had a numerous body of kinsmen and friends, in whose society he liked to unbend himself and freshen his remembrance of years gone by. Often do I recreate my own fancy by bringing this truly great and good man before my mental vision just as he was when I gazed upon him fifty years ago placidly loitering along the streets of our county town, on court days, exchanging kindly greetings with the friends of his youth of all classes, hearing from their own lips all of good or of evil which might perchance have befallen either themselves or their families since he had last encountered them, and seeming to take a real and affectionate interest in everything connected with their welfare and happiness. Well do I remember that this gratifying spectacle was sometimes surveyed by one who stood to me at the time in relations of tender and confidential companionship; whose extraordinary intellectual promise, associated with all the moral graces that can adorn young, energetic manhood, had already called forth the most favorable prognostics of his future fame and usefulness from a host of loving and admiring friends; prognostics which have been since most abundantly realized: for that friend of my early years has, in the half century that has rolled away since he and I were fellow-students in our native State and poring

over together the pages of Coke and Blackstone, has acquired a high reputation, both as a jurist and advocate, in one of the largest and most populous States of the Union; has accumulated a large estate chiefly by his labors as a barrister, and is now honorably occupying a seat upon the Bench of that high tribunal of which John Marshall was himself the chief ornament, when he and I, full fifty years ago, were surveying with an affectionate admiration—not unmixed perchance with a certain sense of awe—the serene glories which encircled this illustrious personage. Will that friend of my youth forgive me if I remind him here of certain mystic colloquies held between two students of law at a period in the dim past, now so remote, touching the expediency of selecting betimes some well-known *model* of intellectual excellence for imitation, in order to keep alive our hopes and preserve our energies in full vigor until those lofty heights of renown should be at last reached to which a generous and all-potential ambition was even then prompting us both to aspire? Will he forgive me if I take a still greater liberty, and suggest that even at the time to which I have alluded, whilst contemplating the grave splendors associated with the name of Marshall, it was not in his own noble nature to remain altogether unconscious of some such inspiring glow of magnanimous rivalry as once warmed the bosom of the youthful Themistocles, and which impelled him to heave a sigh over the hard-earned glories of the great Miltiades?

It will be, at least, regarded by some as a remarkable fact, that when, some eighty years ago, at a time when Judge Taney's early demise or resignation was confidently expected in a few days to occur, the office of Chief Justice, in the event of a vacancy arising as described, was tendered by Mr. Lincoln to Judge Swayne; so that if he is not now occupying this high place, it is not because

the lamented Lincoln did not deem him worthy to hold it. Had President Lincoln's original intentions touching this matter been carried into effect, then, within (comparatively speaking) a very limited period of time, the American people would have seen *two Chief Justices of the Supreme Court of the Union selected from the same county in the bosom of the Ancient Dominion!*

A short statement of *facts* will render this matter a little plainer. President Lincoln did formally tender the place of Chief Justice to Mr. Justice Swayne. He, as formally, did accept the proffered honor. But this chanced to take place in the year 1864, when a dire civil war was yet raging, and when a long protraction of hostilities was to be apprehended if perfect harmony and concord should not be preserved in the non-seceding States of the Union. Chief Justice Chase had been spoken of very freely as a probable candidate for the Presidency in opposition to Mr. Lincoln, whose re-election was by many deemed essential to the ultimate success of the Union cause. Now, though at the time of Judge Taney's actual decease Mr. Lincoln had been nominated, yet his name continued to be mentioned freely in connection with the Presidency, and it was by many deemed possible that Mr. Chase might be eventually persuaded to run as an independent candidate. Whether there was any reason to expect that he would thus yield to the outspoken wishes of some of his political and personal friends I have no adequate means of deciding. But the following facts are certain: Patriots became everywhere anxious to prevent any conflict in the bosom of the Republican party, which, it was feared, might bring about the election of General McClellan. Under these circumstances a number of enlightened and well-intentioned citizens favorable to the election of Mr. Chase called upon Mr. Lincoln, and urged him to consent to the elevation of this gentleman to the position of Chief

Justice; in consideration of which they proffered to withdraw him altogether from the field of contest. This was a sore trial to President Lincoln. He did not at all doubt the competency of Mr. Chase, and he was a warm admirer of his character and abilities. But he had already tendered the Chief Justiceship to his friend, Judge Swayne. Then it was that the magnanimity and elevated disinterestedness of Justice Swayne were made nobly manifest. When President Lincoln approached him on the subject in the most delicate and decorous manner, and informed him of the perplexing dilemma in which he had become involved, he did not hesitate one instant to release his loved and honored friend from the pledge which he had voluntarily given him; and he cheerfully consented to sacrifice his own claims to official promotion upon the altar of his country's happiness.

There is another curious fact which I deem it proper to relate, an account of which I gave in a volume published by me six years ago. Judge Chase is known to have been for many years a Democrat in principle. He was from the days of early manhood a zealous and fearless opponent of domestic slavery, and had often signalized his devotion to principle by strenuous opposition as an advocate to what was called the *fugitive slave law*. He was no *secessionist*, in the ordinary sense of that term, but he was conscientiously regardful of what he recognized as the reserved rights of the States, and he was clearly of opinion that the fugitive slave law was a serious infraction of these rights. When he was acting in the office of Governor of Ohio he resolved to bring this matter to a test in the courts of the State. The manner in which the question as to the validity of the law was raised is familiar to all. When the matter was under examination in the Supreme Court of Ohio there were three judges there presiding. One of these was known to regard the

law as constitutional; another was ready to express an opposite opinion; whilst the third, Judge Swan, was supposed not to have made up his mind upon the subject. President Buchanan had employed Judge Swayne, then a practicing lawyer in Columbus, to make an argument in support of the right of the Federal Government to enforce the fugitive slave law upon the soil of Ohio. It was perfectly well known that if the State Supreme Court should decide against the validity of the law, and Mr. Buchanan should still persist in enforcing it, the Governor of the State would feel it to be his duty to resist the attempt *in arms;* and that he had accordingly made all necessary arrangements to carry his views into effect. It was evident, therefore, that it depended essentially upon the action of Judge Swan whether domestic peace should be maintained or a bloody civil war be initiated. I arrived in Columbus on the very day that this controversy was brought to a conclusion, and immediately on reaching the hotel where I put up, I heard that Judge Swayne had made the ablest speech of his life in support of the law, and that the Supreme Court had decided the question at issue in favor of the United States. Thus was civil war prevented. How a conflict between the State of Ohio and the Government upon this most appalling question would have resulted it is difficult now to say; but no one can deny that Judge Swayne acquired more true glory on this occasion than twenty years' service as Chief Justice would be likely to procure him.

REMINISCENCE No. XXXVIII.

CHIEF JUSTICE CHASE—GOVERNOR BROWNLOW—JEFF DAVIS.

A very unexpected and exceedingly welcome letter from my valued friend, Senator Brownlow, reminds me of a duty which I had intended sometime since to perform in reference to a distinguished personage, now no longer among the living, but for whom I have for many years cherished a very elevated esteem and a very cordial friendship. I allude to the late Chief Justice Chase. I made some allusions to this gentleman several days since—certainly, as my heart avouches, in a most kindly and respectful spirit; but I soon found myself grossly misunderstood in reference to this matter by some injudicious and superserviceable friend of his, by reason of whose objurgatory criticisms I was compelled to stand so promptly and earnestly upon my own defense that the duty which I felt to be owing to the illustrious dead was for the time left but in part discharged. Senator Brownlow, having seen the somewhat embarrassing predicament in which the unknown writer just referred to had placed me, and concurring with me in the main, as will be presently seen, touching the Chief Justice's character and qualifications, as well as in regard to his undeniable preference for the performance of official functions other than those of a strictly judicial nature, has been good enough by the last mail to send me some evidence illustrative of this delicate and interesting point, to the present adduction of which I suppose that no dispassionate and sound-thinking friend of the late Chief Justice will be at all inclined to object.

Before presenting Senator Brownlow's letter to me, just

received, and that of Judge Chase, which comes inclosed therein, I have one or two remarks to make, which I trust will not have the ill-fortune to give offense in any quarter. I have long thought the office of President of the United States one of more dignity than any other whatever, and requiring for the proper and creditable discharge of the functions annexed thereto the highest powers of intellect and the most commanding qualities of soul. To give to a country like ours a four years' administration uniformly marked with wisdom and virtue equals my highest ideas of human glory, and a man like Chief Justice Chase, who had every reason to regard himself as capable of occupying the Presidential office with credit to himself and with honor to the Republic, was more than justified in being willing to enter upon a field of duty so much more extensive and variegated than that which is presented to the view of any man whatever whose moral and intellectual energies are confined within the, comparatively speaking, very limited compass of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Union. I do not at all doubt that if any Chief Justice that the country has known had at any time found the Presidential office clearly within his reach he would cheerfully have submitted to his name's being used as a candidate for this elevated position. Nor do I at all question that if Chief Justice Chase had been elected to the Presidency he would have shown himself to be possessed of all the capability demanded for the honorable discharge of the duties annexed thereto, nor that he would have been able thereby to establish many additional claims to the gratitude and admiration of his countrymen, both now and hereafter. That he was a sound and well-informed lawyer no one, so far as I am informed, has ever yet denied; that he was honest, diligent, and courteous in the discharge of his judicial functions is universally admitted; but I am, and always have been, well

satisfied that he would have made a much abler President than judge; and that if chosen President, with his very liberal, progressive, yet conservative views, he would have given to the country such an administration as all good and patriotic men would have approved and commended. The only objection which has ever suggested itself to my mind in regard to Judge Chase's complete success in the performance of the duties which the Chief Executive Magistrate of the Republic is expected to take upon himself consists in the fact that he is well known to have had rather extreme views in favor of what are called State rights and State sovereignty, and I should always have feared that he would have been found, in certain exigencies easy to be imagined, unduly averse to the exercise of the coercive powers of the General Government, as Mr. Buchanan is known to have been. This same objection, I suppose, would always have applied with equal, and perhaps with superior, force to the renowned political leader of Georgia, Alexander H. Stephens, a man of great virtue and of unquestionably high abilities, but whose devotion to the dogma of secession, it seems to me, might, if raised to the Presidential station, turn out, under certain circumstances possible to occur, to be a most prolific source of mischief. I will here mention, in passing, a curious fact, not, I think, generally known. I heard Stephen A. Douglas, in a speech delivered by him in the city of Atlanta, Ga., in the year 1860, declare that his friends in the Charleston Democratic Convention of that period from the State of Illinois had been requested by him, if they should find his own nomination for President by that body impossible, to do all in their power to secure this honor to his friend Mr. Stephens. In thus incidentally mentioning this distinguished son of Georgia I seize the opportunity of saying that, though I differ from him very seriously upon many public questions which might be

mentioned, there is no man now in the cotton-growing region of the Republic at all equal, in my judgment, to him, in strength and clearness of mind, in general mental culture, and in capacity for the industrious, earnest, and persevering examination of difficult and perplexing public questions. His honesty and nobleness of spirit are beyond praise; no man is more perfectly independent in his opinions and sentiments than he is; no man is more inclined to do full and perfect justice to political adversaries of every cast, and despite his abstract devotion to the strange and impracticable theory of secession, the Republic does not hold within its limits a man of more enlarged and disinterested patriotism, and of a more expanded Christian charity, than Alexander H. Stephens.

So much of the letter of Senator Brownlow as does not relate to matter strictly private will now be set forth, together with the whole letter of Chief Justice Chase to him, in disregard of his own request that the portion commendatory of himself should be excluded. I take this course because (with all due deference) I do not think Mr. Brownlow has a right to conceal from the world the opinion entertained by such a person as Judge Chase in relation to the character of a public servant so cruelly traduced as I hold my friend Mr. Brownlow for many years past to have been:

KNOXVILLE. *August* 28, 1873.

Hon. H. S. Foote:

MY DEAR GOVERNOR: I am very grateful for the kindly, generous words you have written of me in the *Chronicle*. When, in 1865, I took up my residence in Nashville as Governor of this State, you were one of the very few men of character and influence who had been identified with the defeated Confederacy who did not meet me with denunciation of the loyal State government inaugurated. And you were the only citizen of Tennessee of prominent position in the government of the rebel confederacy in its civil or military departments who had the courage openly to accept the results of the war, acknowledge the overthrow of the doctrine of secession, and favor the protection, education,

and amelioration of the recently emancipated colored population of the State. If other men in Middle and West Tennessee who held seats in the rebel Congress, or occupied high military station, had acted in the spirit which governed your conduct, instead of meeting the friends of the Union in a spirit of hatred and factious opposition, they would not have had so much complaint to make against what they termed "Brownlow's disfranchising despotism."

I am rejoiced to see that you are handling without gloves that cold-blooded conspirator and heartless demagogue, Colonel Jefferson Davis, of Memphis. He is, and has always been, one of the worst men in the South. When bearing aloft the old flag of the Union you defeated him for Governor of Mississippi you gave the only check to the mad ambition of this modern Cataline which he ever received, except when Wilson's cavalry nabbed him in the petticoats, hoops, and bonnet of one of those old women who are to aid him in his new campaign against the Union. From defiantly preaching treason in Virginia I believe that you can drive him into retirement, and the country will never more hear of Jeff., or be menaced with his petticoat brigade.

If he had as much self-respect as Judas he would go out and hang himself; or if he were capable of realizing his deep disgrace, and the contempt in which good men hold him and his puny efforts at a new revolt against the Federal Union, he would feel like exclaiming, as did a baffled conspirator of ancient times, but a wiser one,

> Let me live unseen, unknown,
> And unlamented let me die;
> Nor mound, nor monument, nor stone,
> Tell where I lie.

On one condition I would be glad to see old Jeff. continue his speaking campaign just inaugurated at White Sulphur Springs. I understand that some of the Rip Van Winkle Democrats, who have not yet learned that slavery is abolished and the Democratic party dead, desire to run Colonel Jefferson Davis, of Memphis, for Governor of Tennessee. I hope they will do so, and I believe Davis wants to make the race. In that event I hope to see you take the field as a candidate.

For several years I regularly corresponded with the late Chief Justice Chase. I was personally much attached to him, had the honor of frequently being made the recipient of his esteem, and while, in the latter years of his life, I was compelled to dissent from some of his views, I regarded him as a very able and patriotic citizen.

Since reading your Reminiscences I have accidentally found one of several letters he wrote to me on reconstruction. I inclose it, that you may copy and publish, if you see fit, that portion referring to the

Fourteenth Amendment and its adoption by Tennessee. You can publish all of it except his allusions to myself, of a personal and complimentary character.

* * * * * * * *

Your friend,

W. G. BROWNLOW.

And here is the interesting letter of Chief Justice Chase *in totidem verbis:*

WASHINGTON, *June* 14, 1866.

DEAR GOVERNOR: This is the first time I have addressed you since I was Secretary of the Treasury and you a special agent of the Department. Each of us is in a different position now. You have been made Governor of Tennessee, and so called to duties which require the clearest of heads and the bravest of hearts, and have been found competent and faithful. I have become a judge, in which office I confess myself less at home than when a co-operator with the friends of union and freedom in the grand cause of human progress. But both as a judge and as a citizen I feel a profound interest in the complete restoration of the Union and the perfect re-establishment of civil order.

There now seems to be a way open. Congress has proposed an amendment of the Constitution which, it seems to me, must be, on the whole, acceptable to all loyal men, and if it can be adopted at once by Tennessee, its adoption by all the States—or at least the necessary three-fourths—seems reasonably certain. Besides this, its adoption by Tennessee will secure the immediate admission of the Senators and Representatives from that State to their seats in Congress, which the whole country seem anxiously to desire. I verily think no event could be more auspicious to the general welfare of the States than this.

I dare say this letter is only one of hundreds prompted by the same feeling. You will do yourself a great honor, and the country a most important service, if you will immediately convoke the Legislature and submit the amendment to its action. That action, if it be ratification—prompt ratification, so that the Senators and members may take their seats before Congress adjourns—will fill the hearts of patriotic men throughout the land with joy.

I shall be glad to have a letter from you, but beg you not to consider yourself under any obligation to take the time from other subjects for an answer.

Sincerely your friend,

S. P. CHASE.

His Excellency W. G. BROWNLOW.

It is impossible to read over, ever so cursorily, this judicious and patriotic letter of Judge Chase without perceiving the intense solicitude which he felt, at the time of the writing thereof, for the earliest possible ratification of that most important constitutional amendment, which, by giving the fullest protection to the new-found rights of the unfortunate and long-oppressed children of Africa, opened the way also to the speedy restoration of the whites of the South, then but recently emerged from the fires of the rebellion, to the sacred and invaluable political rights which they had been so deplorably persuaded to repudiate. I have several times had occasion to lament that this act of long-deferred justice to those so cruelly held in slavery for centuries had not been voluntarily performed by the ancient white inhabitants of the South themselves, without having to be prompted thereto from any outside quarter. But as the crust of that obstinate bigotry which would still seem to bedarken the intellects of some of the Bourbonites of the South had not yet been even partially broken, there was no mode left of accomplishing the great object specified except the one carried into operation by the enlightened friends of progress and civil concord in the various parts of the Republic. And now that this good work has been consummated, we may well look back to those whose prescience and unwavering patriotism accomplished it with gratitude and respect. That the part which Judge Chase performed at this fearful crisis has been generally approved by his countrymen, as it certainly will be still more emphatically by posterity, no one will be inclined to doubt who considers the fact that a very large portion of the Southern Democrats, so-called, in 1868 struggled hard to get this eminent statesman nominated for the office of President of the United States; and it is really one of the most melancholy instances of moral dereliction which has ever yet occurred

that there are now a very large number of these very persons, including such men as Jeff. Davis, R. M. T. Hunter, *et id omne genus*, who are apparently desirous of undoing, as far as it may be in their power, the goodly work of national reconstruction, of which this same fourteenth amendment is the chief corner-stone.

In reference to what my friend Senator Brownlow says so generously about his desire that I should take the field as a candidate for governor in Tennessee, should Jeff. Davis be so stupid as to allow himself to be announced as an aspirant to this dignity, I have at this time but little to say. I do not think that he is yet quite madman enough to attempt such an experiment, though it has been said:

> Perrupit Acheronta Herculeus labor;
> Nil mortalibus arduum est;
> Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitia, neque
> Per nostrum patimur scœlus
> Iracunda Jovem ponere fulmina.

Should I be disappointed, though, in regard to this particular, and my old Mississippi rival should hereafter be seen attempting to move through Tennessee as a solicitant of the suffrages of that high-minded and patriotic people as a gubernatorial candidate, I will not say that I may not be persuaded to render him all fitting attention; for such a deep and damning disgrace as the election of this grand architect of mischief to the high position referred to would be indeed recognized as an evil by me and by all honest and patriotic men in Tennessee, of a nature positively unendurable. Though, in all gravity, I beg leave to assure my friend, Senator Brownlow, and all others participating in his present expectations as to Mr. Davis' intention to become a gubernatorial candidate, that I know him far too well to suppose it even possible that he

should ever become willing to traverse the hills and valleys of our noble old Commonwealth upon an errand so utterly hopeless; nor do I see how any one can consider such a presumptuous effort for the renovation of his faded glories at all possible who bears in recollection the curious and edifying fact that, according to accounts bearing evident tokens of credibility, the late imperial despot of Richmond has, within the last twelve months, or some such space of time, on at least one notable occasion, found it impracticable to travel, even on a well-arranged railroad car, from Memphis to Huntsville, without finding himself inextricably involved in a predicament exceedingly similar to the one so glowingly described by Homer, who tells us that Mars was found at one time, and exhibited to the view of the Celestials, by Vulcan, in an ingenious wire-constructed cage, which he had managed, amid the sweet hours of nocturnal slumber, to cast about the fierce God of War and Venus, his luckless consociate in bliss; at sight of which sadly ludicrous spectacle all Olympus was stirred to its foundations,

> And unextinguished laughter shook the skies.

I must say to my excellent friend, Senator Brownlow, with unaffected sincerity, that I have lost all that desire of official advancement of any kind which I have once, perhaps, felt too fervently, and that though the good people of Mississippi, of California, and of Tennessee have severally, in former years, done me far more than justice in their estimate of my limited personal deserts, I have no disposition whatever further to trouble the people or their representatives anywhere with my own claims to official advancement. At present I am enjoying in the most ample manner the luxury of individual independence. I think, speak, and write exactly as I please, either in con-

demnation of the wicked or in commendation of the good, whether in places of authority or in private life; and this to me is as near an approach to heavenly beatitude as one yet in the vale of mortality should dare to aspire to. In truth, I have of late, more from an observation of the experience of others than on account of anything which has ever happened to myself personally, been much inclined to apply the beautiful language of the famed Archbishop of Cambrai descriptive of the arts necessary to be used in order to conciliate the favor of the crowned potentates of earth, to the case of such as seek the affection and support of the sovereign people of our own age and country, and to say with him:

Oh! que on est malheureux, quand on est au dessus du reste des hommes! souvent on ne peut voir la verité par ses propres yeux; on est environné de gens qui l'empêchent d'arriver jusqu'à celui qui commande; chacun est interessé à le tromper; chacun, sous une apparence de zèle cache son ambition. On fait semblant d'aimer le roi, et on n'aime que les richesses qu'il donne; on l'aime si peu, que pour obtenir ses faveurs on le flatte et on le trahit.

REMINISCENCE No. XXXIX.

THE DUELLO—LIFE IN THE SOUTH—PERSONAL COMBAT—THE ROB ROY OF THE MISSISSIPPI—A THRILLING NARRATIVE—REMINISCENCES OF SARGENT S. PRENTISS, ALEXANDER K. M'CLUNG, AND OTHERS.

In the winter of 1830–'31 I left Tuscumbia, Alabama, after a residence in that quiet and pleasant village of five years, and migrated to the State of Mississippi. Having very foolishly violated the provisions of the legislative act of the former State prohibitory of dueling, and having been disqualified thereby for the practice of my profession for more than three years, and the business of the courts in that particular locality having meanwhile greatly diminished, I had some months before prepared myself as well as I could for the exercise of my profession in the city of New Orleans, and was, in point of fact, actually on my way there to join the celebrated Seth Barton as a co-partner in the duties of a calling in which I had always felt the deepest interest, when, stopping for a few days in the town of Natchez, on my way to the renowned Crescent City, circumstances soon arose there which brought me to the conclusion to remain in the young and rising State where I then was, which was, upon the whole, perhaps the very best thing I could possibly have done.

Natchez was at that time an eminently flourishing commercial city, and was the abode of a refined, intelligent, prosperous, and hospitable population. The Supreme Court of the State was then in session there, and various other courts of subordinate jurisdiction were sit-

ting from time to time during my sojourn in that vicinage. I heard a number of cases argued with great learning and ability, and found the judges of the courts and the members of the bar all exceedingly polite and accommodating. I formed there many pleasant and valuable acquaintances, every individual of whom I believe has since deceased. It was now that I saw the renowned Sargent S. Prentiss for the first time. He had just been admitted to the bar, and was awakening great expectations of future distinction and usefulness. About two years before Mr. Prentiss had landed in Natchez, as I repeatedly heard from his own lips, with a single dime in his pocket. He had no acquaintance there, and had as yet not studied a profession. His college course had just been completed at an excellent institution in New England, and being quite proficient in the branches of learning to which he had been giving his attention, he determined to make an effort to obtain a small private school. In this he succeeded, and he followed this respectable vocation for a year or two, during which period he was applying himself with extreme diligence to the study of law. The distinguished Robert J. Walker, then a lawyer in full practice, was kind enough to open his library to his eager and inquiring mind, and he was soon able to obtain license to practice in all the courts of the State of Mississippi. Immediately on making his *debut* at the bar he was invited by General Felix Huston to enter his office as a full partner, and some two or three months after this I had the honor of seing him, as I have mentioned.

There was much that was remarkable in the appearance and bearing of Mr. Prentiss at this time. He was not more, I think, than five feet six-and-a-half inches in height ; was very stoutly built, and well proportioned. His head was somewhat large when compared with his

body ; it was one that a Grecian artist might well desire to copy. His forehead was wide, high, and almost semi-circular in its outline—so admirably were all the more important phrenological organs developed. His eye-brows were full, but not bushy, and were gently arched. His eyes were large, bright, and of an expression in which the absolute fearlessness of his nature was very happily blended with the rarest geniality of spirit and the keenest relish for the ludicrous. He had but a moderate beard, and always kept his face cleanly shaven. His chest was one of greatest expansiveness, and, though perfectly straight between the shoulders, a stranger approaching him from the rear could not avoid being struck with the singular breadth and fullness of the whole tergal superficies. His nose was Grecian, and was both beautiful in its shape and highly expressive. His upper lip was a little shorter than is customary, and of a flexibility I have never seen equaled. Often was he seen to curl it up, both in mirth and anger, displaying to view a set of strong, well set, and beautifully white teeth. He had all his life suffered from a lameness in one of his feet, and was said to have a good deal of sensitiveness in regard to its malformation, though this I never was able to discover. He hobbled, of course, very perceptibly in his gait, and would, I suppose, have found it difficult to walk at all without the aid of the large stick which was his perpetual attendant. When I was introduced to him forty-two years ago, Natchez was already full of his fame. He had delivered several speeches at the bar, which all admitted had never been equaled there, either in vigor of argument, brilliancy of expression, or rich and flowing facetiousness. Though very modest by nature, yet he had already had such proofs of his own mental superiority to all with whom he was thrown in competition that he had naturally acquired a noble confidence in his own powers, which could not

but be more or less apparent, both in his aspect and demeanor, and alike in the discussions of the forum and in ordinary converse. I was talking last week with that man of exalted genius and discriminating judgment, the Hon. Joseph Holt, in reference to his former illustrious rival in oratory at the Mississippi bar, and I was glad to find that his opinion of Mr. Prentiss' extraordinary powers was fully in unison with my own. I have been long satisfied that in reference to all the faculties and graces which constitute the orator Sargent S. Prentiss was equal to almost any man of modern times, and such is my estimate of him in this respect that my admiration of any man's mind would very much abate whom I knew to have expressed a different opinion after once listening to him in a case calculated to draw his remarkable powers into full display. At times he was indeed most electrical in his utterances, reminding one forcibly of the soul-thrilling strains of an Isaiah or an Ezekiel, of the majestic thunderings of a Pericles or a Patrick Henry, or of the tender heart-melting pathos of a Somerfield or a Maffit. I was not at all surprised to see it published in the newspapers of Boston many years ago, on the occasion of Mr. Prentiss' visit to that city for the first time, that even in the midst of the memorable dinner speech which he there delivered, Mr. Webster and Mr. Everett, with eyes overflowing under his wondrous enunciations, were heard generously whispering to each other: "We have never heard such eloquence as this before."

That Mr. Prentiss was a man of fearless temper, almost sometimes bordering upon audacity, nobody could possibly know better than this reminiscent; that he was kind of nature, generous, honorable, truthful, and intensely patriotic all the world believes; that he was a faithful friend, a tender husband, and an obedient and devoted son the fullest evidence has been long since given to the

public. Were I to say anything which could at all detract from the picture already drawn of this estimable person, I could only say that it seemed to me that in his atter years—not having sufficient leisure, perhaps, to devote to books of science and the volumes of varied literature—his intellectual culture did not exactly keep pace with his native faculties.

It is gratifying to me to remember that I once voted for S. S. Prentiss when he was a candidate for Congress, against the regularly nominated ticket of my own party, just as now I should rejoice to recollect that I had co-operated in elevating to the Presidency of the Union two such noble-spirited and gifted American statesmen as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster; whose names, could they be inscribed on the Presidential scroll in lieu of two others that I could specify, would transmit our loved Republic to the men of other ages invested with a grand and imperishable luster that all the vain and heartless triumphs of faction, devoted to the ingathering of the vulgar and perishable spoils of office, can never compensate.

I heard nearly all of Mr. Prentiss' most renowned oratorical efforts at the bar, in legislative assemblies, and in presence of the people. I should say that his speech in prosecution of Alonzo Phelps, "the Rob Roy of the Mississippi, (as he himself felicitously entitled him;) the one he made in prosecution of Mercer Byrd; his much-talked-of effort at Nashville in the summer of 1840, during the Presidential campaign of that period, and that oft-commended address before the House of Representatives in Congress in vindication of his claim to a seat in that body, were his master-pieces. I chanced to be enlisted in the defense both of Phelps and Byrd, and had therefore a most favorable opportunity of appreciating the power exhibited on the part of the prosecution. Alonzo Phelps was a native of New England. According to his own

autobiographical confession, (drawn up chiefly by himself, but in my own presence, a few days before his death, while detained as a prisoner,) he had, in a fit of jealousy, slain a rival lover in his native vicinage, secreted the body of his victim in a neighboring mill-pond, and fled to the valley of the Mississippi. He had here been a wanderer for many years, seldom entering a human habitation, and subsisting altogether on the raw meat of squirrels and other wild animals which he had captured in the chase. He had long infested the banks of the Mississippi, had committed eight murders and more than sixty robberies, and had a dozen times broken jail and escaped the punishment of the law. Strange to say, he was a ripe and accurate scholar, and when taken prisoner, a few weeks subsequent to the perpetration of his last murder, had, as I personally know, a pocket copy of Horace in his possession, which he read with great facility and with far more relish for the rare beauties of the poetic friend and *protege* of the great Mecænas than Lord Byron reports himself to have at any time done. The trial of Phelps took place about four weeks after my last hostile meeting with Prentiss, and when I defended him I was still hobbling on crutches. A vast crowd was in attendance on the day of trial at the court-house in Vicksburg. Judge Montgomery, a learned and able functionary, who, I am glad to know, is still living, presided on the occasion. I was aided in the defense by two very accomplished gentlemen, Mr. John Gildart, of Woodville, Miss., and Mr. Pelton, then a resident of Natchez, now a wealthy sugar planter of Louisiana, and a most worthy and interesting gentleman. General Felix Houston and several other attorneys of rank co-operated with Mr. Prentiss in the prosecution. This gentleman on that occasion delivered by far the most eloquent and effective speech I ever heard at the bar. It would have given increased fame to Erskine, to McIntosh,

or to Curran. His delineation of the character of the accused was most masterly, in the course of which he bestowed upon him the imperishable cognomen of "The Rob Roy of the Mississippi," in allusion to his habitually levying "black mail" upon the travelers whom he, from time to time, encountered on the highways along the banks of the Mississippi; hundreds of whom he had robbed, and some of them under truly romantic and ludicrous circumstances. Phelps had been, of course, relieved from his irons before being brought into court for trial; but it had been deemed expedient to surround him with an armed guard. His appearance on the occasion was very striking and impressive. He was a muscular, well-shaped man, about five feet eleven inches in height, and evidently possessed of great physical vigor and activity. He had a particularly fair complexion, a good deal freckled from constant exposure to the air. His hair was blood-red, was much inclined to curl, and his crispy, snake-like locks stood stiffly up over and about his cranium with a singularly fierce and menacing aspect. His keen, gray eyes exhibited a curious blending of audacity and furtiveness.

Prentiss' speech galled and irritated him greatly. When the inspired orator looked round upon the prisoner with a most withering glance of scorn and indignation, Phelps, in the desperate agony of the moment, stooped and whispered in my ear the following terrific words: "Tell me whether I stand any chance of acquittal, and tell me frankly; if my case is hopeless I will snatch a gun from the guard nearest me and send Mr. Prentiss to hell before I shall myself go there." Never was I so much embarrassed in my life. I saw that my robbing and murdering client was in dead earnest. I did not doubt that Mr. Prentiss was at this moment completely in his power. If he should slay him he would deprive of life one whom I could not help loving and admiring much, despite the

unkind relations then existing between us. Were Prentiss slain by the hands of this fiendish ruffian immediately after this whispering intercourse with me, who of all that crowd would hold me guiltless? I may have done wrong, but frankness constrains me to confess that I said to this wretch, "You are not in the least danger; we will make a motion in arrest of judgment after a while, or for a new trial, which will save you from all further annoyance." Prentiss concluded his speech; the jury returned a prompt verdict of "guilty," and Phelps was remanded to his cell, there to await the execution of the sentence passed upon him. Meanwhile I was again summoned to the prison to aid this man in the preparation of his confession, a document afterward published as his "Autobiography." Before the writing of it was completed I had to leave Vicksburg for one of the courts in the interior of the State. I left on the table where I had been writing a leaden inkstand for Phelps' use, out of which I had been myself writing. After scribbling some twenty or thirty pages of manuscript in addition, he closed by the declaration that he did not intend to be hung; that he had once been a *soldier*, and he intended to die the death of a soldier. After this he asked that a preacher of the Gospel should be sent for to minister to him the last spiritual consolation. Rev. Mr. Marshall, then, as now, a resident of Vicksburg, was sent for and came. In the meantime Phelps had prepared himself for the performance of an extraordinary feat. He had contrived in some way to saw the manacles which bound his hands almost in two, so that with a strong effort he could burst them asunder. He had enveloped the leaden inkstand in a stocking, and stood with it grasped in both hands behind the door when Mr. Anding, the jailor, opened it and conducted in Mr. Marshall. With a single blow he knocked down the jailor. Mr. Marshall had time

to fly into another room, which he saw open, and had sufficient presence of mind to lock himself therein securely. By this time Phelps, having made an unsuccessful effort to disencumber his hands, snatched a large knife from the belt of Mr. Anding, walked out of the door of his own cell, closing the door behind him, and advanced to the outer door of the jail. By this time the alarm had been given, and Mr. Howard, the sheriff, came to the jail yard with a number of attendants, many of whom were armed. The outer door was forced open, by order of the sheriff, by the use of axes. The first man that entered saw blazing before his face the uplifted knife of Mr. Anding, which Phelps held firmly in both of his fettered hands. The door-opener recoiled, and Phelps marched forth. The crowd incontinently gave way before him. He strode a few steps toward the gate of the prison yard. The sheriff struck him a severe blow over the head with a heavy gun which he held in his hands, which slightly stunned him. He still strode forward, got without the gate, and was rapidly descending the hill toward the river, when brickbats, sticks, and other missiles were hurled at him in great number. One of the brickbats struck him in the small of the back and seriously disabled him. Upon this, he turned suddenly round to the sheriff, who was pursuing him with a loaded gun, and demanded death at his hands. He fired, and there was an end to the earthly career of "The Rob Roy of the Mississippi."

In the case of Mercer Byrd, already mentioned, Mr. Prentiss was employed to prosecute by Alexander G. McNutt, afterward Governor of the State. His fee for prosecution was $4,000. The prisoner was charged with being accessory after the fact to the murder of a Mr. Cameron, McNutt's copartner in a cotton plantation. Four other negroes had been previously charged with the

commission of this murder, whom I had myself prosecuted to conviction, at the instance of the County Court of Warren county. Judge Sharkey, Judge Coulter, and myself were employed to defend Byrd. Twice was he convicted, and twice did he get his sentence reversed by the decision of the Supreme Court of the State. A third trial now occurred. Byrd had now to meet dangers far greater than those he had been previously compelled to encounter. Stewart's famous book prognosticating the general insurrection of the slaves of the South against their owners had just gained circulation, and the popular mind in Mississippi was in a state of excitement difficult to be conceived by those who were not witnesses thereof. It may be well conjectured that Mr. Prentiss made the most of this state of things. Never shall I forget his terrible delineation, in his concluding speech, of Mercer Byrd on horseback, at the head of an army of infuriated blacks, burning, slaying, and destroying all that they encountered in their fiery and desolating career. Mercer Byrd, being a free man of color, of uncommon intelligence and of most commanding aspect, was a fine subject for the display of Mr. Prentiss' rare powers of delineation. The jury almost convicted him in the box, but several of them often told me afterward that they deeply regretted the verdict, for they then thought Byrd innocent, though Mr. Prentiss' irresistible eloquence had driven them to the verdict which had taken away his life.

There are facts connected with Mercer Byrd's subsequent confession of a singularly startling and distressful character, which I may notice hereafter, but which, for particular reasons, I shall not mention here.

Of Alexander K. McClung I have promised to give some account. He was born in my own native county of Fauquier, in Virginia, but was reared in Kentucky. He was nephew to Chief Justice Marshall, his mother being

sister to that eminent personage. I never met with Colonel McClung until some time in the autumn of 1832. He was then only about twenty-three years of age, was exceedingly good-looking, and of most modest and gentlemanly manners. He was said to have inherited a handsome patrimony, but to have pretty well gotten through with it before his arrival in Mississippi. He had been educated for the navy, and had been on several interesting expeditions as a midshipman before I met him first. He had already fought several duels, information of which preceded his advent to the State of Mississippi. His first affair of honor was with a brother midshipman, whom I afterward knew well as Commodore Hinton, of the Texan navy. This duel had been fought on the coast of South America, and in it McClung had been wounded in one of his arms. His second affair of honor was with a first cousin of his, a young Mr. Marshall. McClung was the challenged party, had quietly received the fire of his adversary, and had then fired in the air, after which the parties had been reconciled. He reached Mississippi just before my second fight with Mr. Prentiss occurred, and he acted as my second. This affair accidentally brought him into collision with a young gentleman of about the same age, known as General Allen. The precise particulars of their misunderstanding I never knew distinctly, and if I did I should not here detail them. These young gentlemen soon after became bitter foes. Allen passed one morning through the town of Clinton, where I was then residing, declaring that he was on his way to Jackson, where McClung was located, in order to bring this gentleman to a full responsibility for all the grievances which he considered himself to have received at his hands. Not being willing to have one to whom I was so much indebted taken by surprise, I mounted on horseback and pushed across the country by a road much shorter than

the one commonly traveled, and notified McClung of the impending danger. The parties in an hour or two met on the street-side, both thoroughly armed, and after discussing the matters in dispute between them for some time in a very tempestuous manner withdrew to their respective boarding-houses. I had hoped that this painful affair was over, and became engaged in some urgent professional business, when I heard that a duel was about to occur between them on the verge of the town of a very desperate character. The parties did, in point of fact, meet about sunset that evening on the bank of Pearl river, in presence of a numerous concourse of citizens, each armed with six pistols. They were stationed by the seconds at the distance of sixty yards from each other; the word of command was given, and both the antagonists advanced. Allen moved forward rapidly, exclaiming: "Now we will see who of us is a d—d coward!" McClung, after having taken a single step, stopped, saying in response, with great coolness: "Yes, we shall see." At the same time he raised his pistol and fired. At the distance of thirty paces Allen was shot through the mouth; several of the poor fellow's teeth were torn away, and part of his tongue amputated. He died in great torture a few hours thereafter. This duel should never have been allowed to occur. I have never doubted that the difficulty between these two very promising and brilliant young men would have proved easy of adjustment had proper and seasonable interposition occurred. My own relations with the parties were unfortunately such as to disqualify me altogether for the part of a peacemaker, else I certainly should not have been slow to perform this duty. I had, a year or two before, by interfering between General Allen and a particular friend of mine, Mr. Philips, been able to succeed in preventing a fatal meeting, after the parties had

traveled sixty miles for the purpose of shedding each other's blood upon a mere *punctilio*.

Colonel McClung was afterward engaged in a duel with Mr. Menifee, which terminated fatally to the latter. Of this affair I have only to say that I never met with any one who supposed that Colonel McClung had been seriously to blame.

He was a lawyer by profession, and had doubtless mastered the legal science very thoroughly, but he had never been much concerned in practice. He was a man of high literary culture, and was, perhaps, the ablest and most polished writer that Mississippi ever contained. About the year 1844 he established a newspaper in the city of Jackson, called *The True Issue*, the numbers of which attracted great notice at the time, and impressed all who read them with the fullest conviction as to the powers and attainments of the author. He explored the questions of a national bank and a protective tariff with a display of originality and logical power which greatly extended his fame. In illustration of the merits of these productions of his gifted pen I may be permitted to relate a rather curious anecdote. Mr. Prentiss was invited to visit the Northern States in the summer of that year for the purpose of discussing the questions involved in the Presidential canvass. He accepted the invitation thus extended, and in the course of a few weeks delivered a series of harangues which brought upon him much and deserved commendation. Some of the readers of the newspapers about Jackson called Colonel McClung's attention to the fact that Mr. Prentiss had incorporated into his addresses considerable portions of the editorial articles which had previously appeared in *The True Issue*, without giving to that paper the proper credit therefor. Colonel McClung felt somewhat aggrieved by this conduct of Mr. Prentiss (though for this gentleman he certainly

had much esteem and friendship) and he determined to hold a special interview with him on the subject. This interview afterward took place at the celebrated restaurateur in Jackson known as "Spangler's," where the following dialogue substantially occurred:

Mr. McClung. Mr. Prentiss, I have seen that you had repeated *verbatim* in the speeches recently delivered by you in the North copious extracts from articles previously emanating from my pen, and without giving me any credit therefor. Pray, how did this occur?

Prentiss. I will explain with the greatest pleasure. I was called so very suddenly to the North that I had no time to make adequate preparation for the delivery of the speeches claimed from me by our party. I was somewhat embarrassed about the matter; but I fortunately recollected that you, my excellent and accomplished friend, had written upon the questions upon which I was expected to descant with singular power and eloquence; and knowing your devotion to the Whig cause, and your friendship for me personally, as well as the peculiar generosity of your nature, I had no hesitancy about appropriating what you had thus so ably written in the manner reported to you. Had I known where to find matter better than that which you had thus supplied perhaps I might have been a borrower elsewhere. Had I formally given you credit at the time for what I was so effectively using, I should have incurred the risk of greatly impairing the influence of your noble utterances and of diminishing the *éclat* which I was myself acquiring by your help. I borrowed ideas from you freely and unceremoniously, just as I should expect you to use my purse at any time should your own become temporarily exhausted.

It is almost unnecessary to state that this explanation was most satisfactory, and that the two friends were only

additionally endeared to each other by this felicitous *eclaircissement.*

When the death of Mr. Clay occurred, the Legislature of Mississippi invited Colonel McClung to deliver an oration at the State Capitol in honor of the illustrious departed. This oration I had the satisfaction of hearing, and I afterward read it with attention, and more than once. It is perhaps the very best of all the eulogies delivered about this time upon the august statesman and orator of Kentucky, and our Legislature ordered five thousand copies of it to be printed for distribution.

Colonel McClung greatly distinguished himself in the Mexican War, and in the celebrated charge upon the fort at Monterey had been the foremost man, thus covering himself with immortal honor. He was lieutenant colo to the 1st Mississippi regiment, of which Jefferson Davis was full col onel.

When certain new regiments were raised during the Administration of Mr. Pierce for frontier service this war- worn veteran had hoped, as his numerous friends had also done, that he would receive some respectable commission from President Pierce, or rather from the Department of War, which had full control of this matter. This noble scion of a noble stock was very much reduced in his pecuniary circumstances at the time, and had been repeatedly compelled to tax the generosity of his friends in a manner painfully humiliating to his own proud and sensitive feelings. For some weeks he had reason to believe that his merits and sufferings would not be wholly overlooked by the Administration. But he had taken a very active and zealous part against *secessionism* in the memorable Mississippi campaign of 1851, and it appeared in the sequel that there was no official favor in store for him in Washington city. On the morning that his last spark of hope became extinct, this noble-spirited and gifted man sought

relief from all the cares and disappointments of life in *suicide!*

Early in the year 1836 the Hon. Charles Lynch was inaugurated Governor of Mississippi. He gave a levee at his office to his fellow-citizens generally. Among other guests, the celebrated George Poindexter was present. He was then a candidate for re-election to the United States Senate, and the Democrats of the Legislature had nominated Robert J. Walker as a candidate in opposition to him. There was pretty free circulation of stimulating liquids of one kind or another at Governor Lynch's party, and Mr. Poindexter (a thing not very unusual with him in those days) had imbibed very freely. At the instance of some of his admiring friends he mounted a table and delivered a furious political address, in which General Jackson, whom he mortally hated, was most unmercifully abused and ridiculed in connection with certain official appointments which he had then recently made in the State of Mississippi, including that of Colonel Samuel Guinn to the position of register of public lands, at the town of Clinton. Guinn chanced to be present, and, upon the impulse of the moment, hissed the distinguished orator. This greatly excited several of Mr. Poindexter's friends, and, among others, Judge Isaac Caldwell, a former partner of Poindexter in the practice of the law. Much unkind language was interchanged between gentlemen on either side. Guinn, who was a particular friend of mine, and one whom I greatly admired and loved, sent to Clinton for me in order to take my advice as to what was to be done in the case. I advised him not to challenge Caldwell, but to leave matters as they were for the present. The election for United States Senator came off the very day that I reached Jackson, and Mr. Walker was elected. This result embittered Mr. Poindexter and his friends very much. The day after this defeat a challenge,

drawn up in the handwriting of Poindexter, was dispatched by Caldwell to Guinn. He accepted, to fight next morning at daylight, just outside the limits of the village. Guinn selected me as his second. We proceeded to the ground at the time agreed on, and found the adverse party already there and a vast concourse of citizens in attendance. All the neighboring villages had poured out the tide of population to take a view of the expected combat. The parties were each of them armed with six pistols. They were, upon receiving the word, to move upon each other and fire at pleasure. I won the word, and gave it in the usual manner. Never did I see more valor displayed than by these combatants. They mutually advanced, firing, exchanging the first shot without effect. Caldwell's second shot took effect upon Guin's left breast. He braced himself immediately in the most composed and majestic manner and fired a third time. His third ball struck Caldwell in the very center of the abdomen. Both of these heroic men fell to the ground; their friends gathered around them; they were quickly stripped of their upper vestments, and each of them seemed to be mortally wounded. Poor Caldwell died that very day; Guinn survived for a twelvemonth, but was never afterward a sound and healthy man.

In two or three years the beautiful, accomplished, and opulent widow of Caldwell was persuaded to marry a second time. Her second husband was a young man from New York, but little known in Mississippi. In about two years the village of Clinton was violently agitated by reports of the sudden and bloody death of Mrs. Caldwell, from violence in her own house, by some unknown hand. Circumstances existed which begot painful suspicions that her death had been the result of a painful and sudden dispute between herself and the man with whom she had so surprisingly intermarried, and in a manner most

disgraceful to the latter. Colonel Robertson, her excellent brother-in-law, a man of the most elevated standing, visited me one morning for personal consultation in reference to these melancholly facts, and wished to have a criminal prosecution instituted Before this was positively determined on, the individual suspected had departed the vicinage, no longer perhaps to be heard of on this side of the grave. Such details as these might well nauseate any one with the whole business of dueling.

I could relate several more such scenes almost equally agonizing; but I forbear.

REMINISCENCE No. XL.

ELOQUENCE—A REMARKABLE MAN—SKETCH OF JOHN NEWLAND MAFFIT—AN ELECTRIFYING SPEAKER.

One of the most remarkable men in several respects that I have ever seen was the Rev. John Newland Maffit. I met him first in the year 1835. Several times did I hear him preach, and I had the happiness of entertaining him for a few days at my own residence in the town of Clinton, Mississippi. He has been at different times the subject of much praise, and it was not his fortune altogether to escape decrial. As I had a pretty good opportunity of learning his true character, and of estimating his abilities, I propose to state my own present recollections of this famous individual.

Mr. Maffit was an Irishman by birth, and, as I suppose, could by no means boast an aristocratic descent. His early education had been very limited, and nearly all that he ever knew of books had been obtained in a very irregular manner. I do not suppose that he had ever fully mastered any important department of science. He was but slightly acquainted with any language but that which he spoke; but I have met very few men indeed of any profession who seemed to have at their command a larger stock of pure and well-chosen English words in which to express their thoughts and sentiments in an impressive and captivating manner. He had evidently seen much of the world, and was very familiar with the usages prevailing in the various classes of our population. He was of rather low stature—not being, as I should conjecture,

more than five feet five inches in height. He was of admirable proportions; his movements were easy and graceful, and he might justly have been called a handsome man. He had a well-shaped head; a smooth and commanding forehead; a profuse suit of coal-black, glossy hair; large and lustrous eyes; a handsome nose, mouth, and chin; and his countenance was one of the most bright and attractive I ever gazed upon. His voice was naturally strong and full, and he had evidently added much to its power by the most diligent and persevering culture. Some of its tones seemed to me to be the sweetest and most persuasive I had ever heard. His whole manner was in fact such that no one who listened to him for a single half hour could be at all inclined afterward to criticize any part of his most magical and soul-moving delivery. I do not remember to have listened at any time to a public speaker who, in regard to everything understood to be embraced in the word *action*, at all equaled this warm-hearted and impassioned son of the Emerald Isle. I have known him to produce such effects upon large and intelligent audiences as I have never seen awakened by any other public speaker. There was a mystery about his rhetorical utterances that I was never able fully to comprehend, though so often exposed to their influence. Whilst speaking he really seemed to exert a sort of electrical power which it was almost impossible to resist, and yet must it be confessed that I never heard from him a single discourse which was either very instructive or which left behind it useful and permanent impressions of any kind whatever. His printed sermons were singularly cold and unimpressive, and it would have been difficult to find a single sentence in any of them upon which a person of refined and discriminating taste would have been disposed to lavish commendation on account either of the weight and value of the

thoughts embodied therein, or the unusual beauty and polish of the diction employed. I have been long satisfied that Mr. Maffit possessed histrionic talents which would have won for him the most imperishable renown upon the stage, and I could not be easily persuaded that I have ever met a public speaker on either side of the Atlantic who was so thoroughly versed in all that appertains to the human voice as the grand instrument of persuasion. I have frequently said, in former years, what I now repeat, that, in my opinion, could he have been induced to deliver a course of lectures on elocution, accompanied with such practical illustrations as he would have found it easy to supply, the younger speakers of the country might have greatly profited by listening to them.

Mr. Maffit was a man of very brilliant colloquial powers. He was exceedingly kind and affable in social life, and, so far as I was able to judge, he was altogether free from envy and personal malevolence. Many spoke of him in terms of decrial and ridicule who really knew but little either of his real character or history; and there were some circumstances with which he was fated to come into contact which should claim for him a most liberal allowance in regard to certain weaknesses and indiscretions which have been so freely imputed to him. His heart was warm and generous, his personal attachments were strong and lasting, and he ever cherished an ardent admiration for all that was lofty and heroic either in sentiment or in action. He was intensely devoted to his calling, and was doubtless as accessible as even Cicero himself to the voice of adulation. While he was electrifying multitudes by his inspiring eloquence, it is certain that he sometimes forgot the rules of moderation and forbearance, and grew impatient when artificial impediments of any kind were thrown in the way of his all-conquering powers of persuasion, and that he was sometimes provoked both to com-

plain and denounce aggressors upon his domain in language neither politic nor becoming. In illustration of the correctness of what has just been said I will here mention an occurrence to which general publicity has not, I think, heretofore been given.

In the summer of 1836 I chanced to visit the town of Tuscumbia, in the Tennessee valley, where I had at one time resided, and where I was still very well known. I found that Mr. Maffit had been there for several weeks, and that his extraordinary potentiality as a religious revivalist had been put in exercise in a truly wonderful manner. Day after day and night after night he had been preaching to large and enraptured audiences of ladies and gentlemen, and the interesting work in which he was so earnestly engaged was every moment deepening. Just at this time the young gentlemen of the vicinage made arrangements for a large and fashionable ball at one of the hotels of the town, of which due notice was given through all customary channels of communication. As the night for the coming off of this festive scene approached it was observed that Mr. Maffit began to exhibit striking signs of discontent. He went so far at length as openly to complain that this ball was intended to interfere with his protracted meeting, and he used on one occasion language of a most cutting and disparaging character in reference to those with whom a scheme of sinful enjoyment, so well calculated to operate as an impediment to his labors, had originated. The insulting terms employed by him in reprehension of the persons referred to were doubtless armed with special force and severity by his peculiar manner of enunciating them. It was hardly to have been expected that the worldlings of the vicinage would be altogether patient under this sort of assailment. In point of fact Mr. Maffit soon found that he had awakened a social combustion in Tuscumbia not at all likely to end

in mere retaliatory invective. Very insulting and criminating handbills were posted up in every part of the town, in which Mr. Maffit's character and alleged previous history were most mercilessly dealt with. Caricatures of an exceedingly ingenious and suggestive nature were likewise sent forth, such, in truth, as I dare not describe here. Formal notice, too, was given to Mr. Maffit that if he presumed again to preach in that settlement, certain specified personal indignities of an unnamable kind would be inflicted upon his person. He still continued to hold forth to large audiences. At length warning was given him that if he spoke again in the church where he had previously ministered even his life would be taken. That this was a serious menace, and one likely to be executed, is sufficiently attested by the fact that a carriage which was proceeding from Tuscumbia one evening to the house of some hospitable gentleman in the country, and in which it was supposed Mr. Maffit was riding, was forcibly broken open by a masked and armed crowed, this gentleman having evidently escaped the fate intended for him by declining to ride in the carriage in question, which he did alone in consequence of his having been fortunately apprized of the scheme of violence which had been projected in time to save his life, or at least to avoid insulting treatment of the most extreme character. So intense and general was the excitement then raging that pious members of the Church, of both sexes, went often to the place of worship armed with pistols and daggers for the protection alike of their loved minister and for the vindication of their own religious rights. It was precisely at this critical period of the affair that a committee of Methodist gentlemen very unexpectedly visited me for the purpose of asking my advice in regard to the course proper to be pursued in order to avoid the collision then apprehended. These gentlemen placed before me all the facts just related,

and requested me to accompany them to the Female Academy, where Mr. Maffit was then being hospitably entertained, for the purpose of conferring with this gentleman in person as to the steps proper to be taken in his behalf. I at once complied with their desire; and I did so the more readily by reason of the fact that I knew Mr. Maffit to be at the time a valued citizen of the State of Mississippi, and also the editor of a most interesting and useful newspaper then published in the city of Natchez. When we reached the academy a full and frank consultation was immediately had, the result of which was an arrangement that I should proceed to the Methodist church that very evening, and that, on being formally invited to address the assembled multitude in vindication of my Mississippi friend, I should ascend the pulpit for that purpose, and do what I could to assuage the fearful commotion then in progress. Perhaps I should here state that I could not but know that my interposition had not been sought because of any opinion formed that I would be able to bring on this occasion any powers of persuasion of an extraordinary character, but simply because of the fact that I had been, as heretofore mentioned, the editor of a somewhat popular newspaper in Tuscumbia several years antecedent, and was therefore given credit for more influence over the younger members of society in the vicinage than I should ever have thought of claiming to possess.

At the time specified I made my appearance at the church, according to arrangement, where I found Mr. Maffitt had already arrived. He had come to the place of trial in company with Mr. Robinson, the minister who ordinarily officiated there, with whom he was then seated in the pulpit. A profound stillness prevailed. Presently Mr. Robinson rose and announced to the audience that an old acquaintance and friend of theirs from the State of Mississippi was then present, (mentioning my name,) who,

with their consent, would address them very briefly. After waiting a little while, in order to find out how this proposition was received by the crowd in attendance—having been invited a second time to come into the pulpit—I did so, and proceeded at once in the kindest and most conciliatory manner at my command to perform the task allotted to me. I am certain that what I said would have failed to effect the pacification desired had I not, in the outset, declared that Mr. Maffit had expressly commissioned me to declare the deep regret which he felt at what had heretofore occurred; and, also, in his name, formally to withdraw all the offensive language theretofore uttered by him. I need hardly say that, in my short address, I explained as well as I could Mr. Maffit's merits as a citizen, and extolled, according to my opinion of his deserts, both his extraordinary powers as a public speaker and his great usefulness as a minister of the church with which he was associated, as well as to the community in general, as an efficient and indefatigable champion and advocate of the great and sacred cause of Christian reform. Never in my life was I treated more kindly and respectfully than by that very numerous concourse of gentlemen and ladies. When my frank and unpretending remarks had been drawn to a close, Mr. Maffit rose up with a most modest and subdued aspect, and, after having uttered several sentences of a singularly kind and propitiatory character, delivered a discourse of about an hour's length, which in point of graceful and soul-stirring eloquence was equal to any oratorical effort I have at any time witnessed. The conflict which had been so tempestuously raging for more than a week was now at an end. So soon as the audience was dismissed a new scene had to be encountered: a committee came to invite me to accompany Mr. Maffit to the Female Academy, where, as was made known to us, a large concourse of the gentler sex

would be found assembled, who desired to express their gratitude to me for the manner in which I had aided in the prevention of social violence, and in the restoration of general amicable feeling. On reaching the Academy I beheld a spectacle which I shall ever bear in pleasant recollection. A very large number of beautiful and well-dressed ladies, all dressed in white vestments, presented themselves by the clear light of the unclouded moon, bearing flowers in their hands, which might well have been mistaken for branches of palm. One of their number accosted me and poured forth one of the most glowing and beautiful addresses possible to be conceived of, in which I was more than once referred to in language of kind commendation which I was far from feeling that I deserved, but which was perhaps none the less welcome to me on that account. After this Mr. Maffit and myself were conducted into the house, where we found a rich banquet spread, such as even the lords and princes of the earth might have been glad to partake of. On the next day I took leave of Mr. Maffit, and returned to my own home in Mississippi, after which I never had the pleasure of meeting him; for in a few years from this remarkable occurrence the brilliant and gifted rhetorician, the genial and kind-hearted gentleman, the far famed religious revivalist, ceased to tread that "green earth" to which I have often heard him allude in words of ecstatic affection, but upon whose surface there is much reason to fear he spent but few days of unalloyed and serene happiness.

REMINISCENCE No. XLI.

CÆSARISM—GENERAL GRANT—SENSATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.

This Reminiscent will close the series of numbers written for the *Chronicle*—for the purpose alone of contributing so far as it may lay in his power to do so, to the present pacification of our country, and to a revival of former fraternal sentiments among our people of all classes and sections—by submitting his own deliberate views upon the subject of "Cæsarism," now so vehemently agitated in certain sensational journals of a very extended circulation. Though I find it a little difficult to be serious in regard to a matter so egregiously fantastical in all its bearings, yet as I have been requested in several highly respectable quarters to present such views as I chance to entertain touching the dangers that some are now affecting to descry in the political firmament I do not feel at liberty to be silent. What I have to say at this time upon the topic alluded to will be found, I flatter myself, in complete harmony with all that has heretofore emanated from me since the Reminiscences, now to be suspended for a time, were commenced, several weeks ago.

Did I entertain the dismal apprehensions to which a certain class of political writers have of late given such free expression, I should be indeed one of the most unhappy of men. I have ever loved liberty with an earnestness of affection which no man can adequately set forth in words; and I have always admired our peculiar form of government, almost to the point of idolatry. I am not ashamed to avow the opinion, which I do most de-

voutly entertain, that the political experiment which we are making in this country originated under the direct inspiration of that Divine Being from whom all good things emanate, and that its solution has been thus far conducted under His all-wise and all-benevolent guidance. I have ever thought, and think at this moment, if possible, more strongly than I ever heretofore have done, that the hopes of liberty throughout the world depend, in a great degree, upon our example and the degree of success which may seem to accompany it, as well as upon the sage and active fidelity of our counsels to others, not so happily situated as ourselves, touching the means proper to be used for the attainment of a true and orderly liberty, and for its steady and durable maintenance after it shall have been once acquired. Not the smallest doubt does my mind feel that the Constitution of the United States is by far the wisest and most securely guarded compact of government that the human intellect has ever been able to frame; and I do devoutly believe that the recent amendments of that instrument have greatly added to its value and strengthened its claims to our affectionate regard. The more often I compare our civil institutions with those existing elsewhere the more fully am I confirmed in the favorable opinion I have always cherished of that government under which we live. Every time I have read over anew the debates which occurred in the Federal Convention while the Constitution was gradually assuming that beautiful organic form which it still so happily preserves, my gratitude to the wise and patriotic statesmen who flourished in that golden period of our history has been freshly warmed up and solidified. When I reperuse the immortal numbers of the *Federalist*, which I never fail to do at least once while our planet is moving through its orbit around the great source and center of heat and light, my swelling bosom never fails to confess,

with a deep-drawn, but self-gratulating sigh, its intense, but speechless thankfulness to Him who sent on earth three such men as Hamilton, Madison, and Jay to expound its provisions and fix the interpretation of its vague or doubtful clauses.

The well-known articles of confederation proposed to establish a "perpetual union" between these States; the Constitution, afterward accepted in lieu of these articles, asserts for itself that it has made this Union a "more perfect" one. Now, if, after all, the frame-work of our boasted Government shall turn out not to have been so providently constructed as to secure the continuance of its own vitality for even a single century, then, indeed, will it appear that our venerated forefathers have failed to attain one of the prime objects of their exertions, and the glories which have seemed heretofore to emblazon their temples must fade away into the dimness of nothingness.

In regard to the amendments recently engrafted upon the Constitution I will here say, in addition to what I have heretofore said on this subject, that the effect of adopting them (which has been, in the estimation of some, to weaken the bond of our political alliance) has been exactly the opposite. I have been long of opinion that all three of these same amendments were wisely and seasonably superadded, and that they are all of them just such emendations, both in form and in substance, as the original draftsmen of the instrument would themselves have incorporated therein had they foreseen eighty-four years ago the grave and perilous conjunctures through which their descendants of the generation now passing away have been compelled to pass. My own warm approval of all these amendments was publicly avowed in writing in the city of Nashville, full two years before the celebrated "New Departure" of Mr. Vallandigham beamed upon the country; and since that period I have never had the

least reason to regret the assumption thus early of the only position which, in my opinion, can be held in harmony with the general peace and tranquillity of the Republic. So far am I from supposing that the late amendments have enfeebled the *vinculum* of the Constitution, or diminished the chances of its extended duration, that it really seems to my mind to be quite manifest that they were absolutely needed at the moment of their adoption as buttresses to the governmental fabric to which they were then annexed. We are all much in the habit of prayerfully uttering in regard to our unequaled institutions an exclamation which has now become a little trite: *Esto perpetua!* Yet I suppose no one has supposed that even the Constitution of the United States was destined to last as long as the planet itself which we inhabit; but it would be indeed a most cruel disappointment of apparently well-founded hopes to see Cæsarism, as it has been called, triumphing over it almost before all the sages who united in giving it form and consistence had passed from the stage of earthly existence; yea, even at the very moment when all the strugglers for freedom throughout the world are recognizing its wisdom and priceless value.

So much for the Constitution itself and the chances of its permanent endurance. There are one or two circumstances which have of late much increased my confidence in the long continuance of our present form of government and that union of States upon which it was primarily based. I will briefly state a few of these. The long-menaced experiment of secession has been at last formally tested in practice. This experiment has undeniably proved a signal and even a ridiculous failure, despite all the heroic blood poured forth so generously in homage of what was to prove at last a fanciful and contemptible *ignus fatuus*. The Federal Government, without any unauthorized or very dangerous expansion of its own legiti-

mate powers, has proved itself in the last thirteen years capable not only of defending its own existence against all the attacks of insurrectionary violence, but has also been eventually able to subject to deserved punishment the most powerful government beyond the ocean for daring openly to countenance the efforts made for its overthrow. This double victory is eminently calculated to discourage similar attempts to disrupt the Federal Union in future, and to impart to the true friends of the republican principle everywhere increased confidence in the durability of our particular scheme of government. The absurd and utterly untenable dogma of secession has become at last "a sounding brass and a tinkling symbol." Its sulphuro-phosphorescent upholders may be now safely allowed to expound in whatever lofty and high-sounding phraseology their own tastes may approve the superhuman glories which they may fancy to have marked its descent below the horizon of practical existence, to such infatuated men and women as may still cling with foolish pertinacity to the rotten and decaying fragments of their vainly cherished idol.

It is an equally encouraging consideration that the brief and troublesome career of the so-called Southern Confederacy has triumphantly demonstrated the truth of the following propositions: That secession in the United States, if ever it shall be anywhere apparently successful for a time, will ever be found in the end have held in to its bosom the seeds of self-destruction; for no one can now doubt that wherever a half dozen or more of the States of which the Republic is composed shall have succeeded, by whatever mode, in placing themselves beyond the controlling authority of the Federal Union, they will not be many months in getting up a squabble among themselves for ascendency, or fall into bitter conflict upon some question of local interest; and when that shall have

occurred, the brilliant example of setting up a separate national flag already consummated in their sight will be assuredly imitated. Either the non-coercive theory of Mr. Buchanan will be applied, or the opposite one; in either of which events no result is likely to be achieved over which a reasonable mind would be inclined to rejoice. But experience has shown, in multiplied instances, the probability that whenever a line shall be drawn, in any direction, over the territorial surface of a country once composing a single nation, border wars will be sure to ensue. Border wars will of necessity bring about the creation of standing armies, and standing armies of any considerable strength are sure to eventuate in the downfall of republican institutions.

I now confidently assert that there has never been a time in the history of this Republic when the great body of the American people, North and South, East and West, were more firmly and inseparably attached to the free institutions under which we are living than at present. I shall venture on an additional assertion, the truth of which I am sure that a grave and dispassionate examination will not fail to impress upon any sound and well constituted mind; and that is, that at no former period of our history, not even during the administrations of Washington and Jackson, were the Constitution and laws of the land more firmly and successfully maintained and enforced than at the present moment. Never was more of moderation and forbearance put in exercise by the Executive Department of the Government than we are daily and hourly witnessing. Never were the blessings of civil and religious liberty more fully enjoyed by all classes of our people. At no former time have more multiplied evidences been furnished in all parts of this extended country of a pure and exalted love of liberty, and of a determination to maintain our republican form of govern

ment against every influence which might be brought into conflict with it. Never was there, save in a few well-known localities, more of social and individual virtue, and of all those things which experience has shown most to aid in the maintenance of a healthful public spirit, and to keep alive a sage and wholesome watchfulness over those intrusted with power. In the extended rural districts of our country this happy state of things is well known to prevail to an extent almost unprecedented.

Never, I am sure, were our people less inclined to welcome the establishment among them of anything in the form of an imperial despotism. The institutions of freedom have been additionally endeared to millions of heroic hearts by the precious blood of late so lavishly poured forth in their defense. I do not believe that there are ten thousand men anywhere to be found on the surface of our country who would be willing to yield up our present form of government for any other whatever. We have facilities for the maintenance of free institutions such as the ancients never conjectured of, and of which our honored forefathers themselves could have had but an imperfect conception. Behold our representative form of government! Our partition of all governmental power among three distinct yet co-ordinate departments; our distribution of the law-making power, between two legislative branches of coequal dignity and power, operating constantly as checks and counter-checks upon each other; our numerous local governments, all of them complete in their machinery, and of an organization similar in certain essential features, alike to each other and to that governmental establishment at the grand center of political attraction; our wide-spread and constantly expanding educational institutions, carrying the lights of learning and refinement to every nook and corner of the nation; our admirably organized judicial system, so wisely yet so en-

ergetically administered, except perhaps in a few isolated instances, all over the land; the inestimable trial by jury; the *habeas corpus;* the newspaper press; the telegram: railroads; steamboats; the public mail, and all the other facilities for interchanging ideas: for multiplying knowledge of every kind; for concentrating at any given point, in a few hours or days at most, the means of defense against all attempts of whatever kind to assail freedom or to violate the essential rights of the citizen! Who can take even the most superficial and cursory survey of these things without coming to the conclusion that the people of our own much-favored land and country do indeed possess such a capacity for self-government as never was possessed before by any people that the sun of heaven has yet shone upon?

It can not be denied that the late most deplorable civil war did leave behind it, in various forms, and in various localities, a good deal of demoralization and crime. This, though, is the well-known result of all wars and especially of all civil wars. The same demoralization, and from the operation of precisely the same causes, has been often experienced in England in the course of her bloody and exhausting wars upon her own soil between hostile factions of English people. Other countries could be likewise cited, but it is not necessary.

There is, in my opinion, not the least analogy between the condition of the Roman people in the days of either the first or second Cæsar and that of the people of the United States at the present moment, and no inferences drawn from this remote source can be made at all available for the elucidation of the probable future of our own loved country. The *populus Romanus* never, in point of fact, embraced, even in the days of Rome's greatest freedom and prosperity, the Roman *plebs*. Rome never was a Democracy; she never attempted to make herself a repre-

sentative Democracy or Republic. Rome was, from the days of the expiration of monarchical rule, in the time of Tarquinius Superbus, up even to the time of Marius' seventh consulship, nothing more nor less than a selfish and tyrannical aristocracy, beneath whose scepters the great mass of the Roman populace groaned in continual servitude. The city of Rome was virtually the whole Republic, if such a word as Republic might be in a certain loose sense applied to it. A violent war of almost ever-raging factions constituted the almost unchanging history of the Roman people for nearly three centuries. The aristocratic or patrician rulers of Rome were selfish, unfeeling, and oppressive. The populace were little more than a wretched, undisciplined, unlettered, and unteachable mob. Outside of Rome there was naught besides a disgusting, squalid, brutifying servitude. What wonder, then, that Marius was able to force himself upon a seventh consulship by the aid of only a few thousand wretched military ruffians? Who can feel surprised to learn that Sylla, by a similar armed force, and hardly more numerous, was able to establish himself almost unresisted in the office of perpetual dictator, amidst scenes of sweeping confiscation and butchery that sicken and nauseate the soul? Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus were quietly allowed, in the sight of all Rome, to erect a triumviral despotism which for the time dominated over all things, either in Rome itself or in the desolated provinces. When Cæsar got ready to pass the Rubicon the Roman Senate declared that there was no hope even for temporary tranquillity and safety in the great city, except under the power of Pompey as sole consul. Cicero tells us that no matter how the great civil war might have terminated the same scenes of general carnage and confiscation would inevitably have ensued: and he adduced evidence of the truth of this melancholy statement, drawn from the unblushing declarations of the

Pompeian leaders antecedent to the decisive Pharsalian battle. The Roman people were indeed no longer fit for freedom, if they ever had been; they were capable neither of appreciating it, nor of maintaining it. He, indeed, must have a strangely organized mind who imagines that he can see any points of similitude between the Roman people two thousand years ago and the forty millions of free American citizens who dwell in power and prosperity between the two great oceans which bound this continent.

But where are any indications to be seen of a design on the part of the existing President of the United States to despoil his native country of its dearly-bought freedom? Where is the large mercenary army which he has assembled for the execution of his own fell enterprise? Where has he located a military force large enough to be wielded for the carrying into effect of this alarming *coup d'etat?* Which one of our rich and populous cities is he first to occupy with his invading army? But let me ask, with all gravity, when did this much reviled public servant seriously transcend the limits of his official power, either in war or in peace? When did he fail on any proper occasion to show that he was resolved to keep the military subordinate to the civil power? When did he play the part of tyrant or oppressor toward any man whatever, either in war or peace? On what precise day in the calendar was it that he marched a military force to the American Capitol, in imitation of the noted examples of a Cromwell or a Napoleon the First, and forcibly expelled the American Senators and Representatives of the nation from the seats of legislation?

I did not vote for General Grant in the late Presidential election. I have but a slight personal acquaintance with him. It is, I think, quite probable that we shall never know each other much better than we now do. I

am as little authorized, therefore, to speak for him on this subject as any other man now in Washington city. But I have lived a good while, and I sometimes flatter myself that I have not lived altogether in vain. I know something of men and of their probable motives of action. I have mingled freely with the public men of my generation, and have not, perhaps, been oftener wrong in my estimation of human character than some others of whom I could make mention. I have been stationed for three months past in Washington city, and have been a diligent observer of all the "signs of the times" here displayed to view; and I now declare my firm and rooted conviction that there is not a man to be found upon the soil of America more averse to Cæsarism, as it is called, than the present much-denounced President of the United States. I am confident that if he had a thousand lives he would freely risk them all in defense of our republican institutions. I am quite as confident, too, that no American patriot now living has more respect for the example and character of Washington than has this eminent personage. As to running for the Presidency a third time, I am well satisfied that he has neither said nor done aught to justify a suspicion that he has the least wish to be elected to the Presidency for an additional term. This cry of Cæsarism is not now raised for the first time. The ears of the "Father of his Country" were assailed with the same insulting sounds, and so were those of Andrew Jackson. But the enemies of the principles of progress and the foes of reconstruction should bear in mind that there is no clause of the Constitution forbidding any President running and being elected for a third term; that the important and striking fact that the framers of the Constitution inserted in that instrument no prohibitory clause as to this matter is pretty conclusive proof that they were of opinion that it was at least

possible that an exigency might thereafter arise in which it would become needful that a President, already twice elected, should allow his name to be used a third time in order to defeat the advancement to power of some man of dangerous purposes and principles; that even the example of the venerated Washington can be hardly regarded as more sacred than the Constitution itself, which he several times swore to support; and that no man who properly estimates the character of this great and good man can at all doubt that he would himself have run as a Presidential candidate again had he supposed that his submitting to such a patriotic sacrifice was necessary in order to defeat the aspirations of some wily demagogue of his own time, known to be in close alliance with the Jacobinical faction then reigning in France, and which he had himself seen so menacingly represented in the person of the notorious Genet.

If the enemies of reconstruction and the constitutional amendments wish not to encounter General Grant's heretofore invincible popularity in the Presidential field, common prudence should teach them to change their present political attitude. Let them cease their endeavors to reorganize the rickety and discredited Democratic party for the next Presidential contest. Let them openly and frankly accept the results of the war. Let them cease that constant bickering about trifles, that ill-natured snarling over the ordinary and necessary exercises of power on the part of the Government. Let them make a manly and liberal allowance for results which no commingled wisdom and virtue could possibly have averted. Let them rise up above the arts of low decrial and calumny. Let them evince a proper regard for the honor of their country and the dignity of free institutions as represented by those into whose hands the people themselves have committed for a short term the symbols of official

power. Let them assume a position with prompt and manly frankness which will at once extinguish the suspicions which their own indiscreet conduct has engendered that a secret alliance is now existing between the open supporters of secession in the South and the now reorganizing Northern Democracy for the prosecution of another joint struggle for the reins of Federal power. Let all the opponents of the Administration, among whom there are doubtless many honest and patriotic men, for decency's sake, as well as for reasons of commendable policy, discourage those who were notoriously the most prominent instigators of the late civil war from taking a leading and conspicuous part in upholding what they choose to call the Conservative cause. But above all things, let Jeff Davis be kept at home for a year or two so that he no more play the part of a blustering Goliath, which he is now doing, to the regret of all patriotic men, and to the alarm of some of the friends of the Union. While I am now writing the news is confirmed to the friends of the peace and tranquillity of the National Union that this political maniac has again broken loose from his accustomed keepers and is moving through the land with all the dangerous fury of the canine species at this fearful period of the year. That voice which no popular assemblage east or west of the Cumberland mountains in Tennessee would be pleased to hear has been provoked to new utterances on Virginia soil, and has been heard to reverberate among the hills and valleys of a region heretofore noted for its quietude and decency. How majestically must this persecutor of Stonewall Jackson and Joe Johnston have thundered at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs last week, according to the account which has reached us, while he was crying havoc! and letting loose the dogs of war once more upon a blood-stained and devastated land,

eructating his factious nonsense amid the torrid fumes of ill-distilled whisky rising up thick and foggily from scorched and blistered stomachs and the dark and ominous clouds of tobacco smoke ascending cheerily from aristocratic cigar and plebeian cornhusk pipe! How murkily did he manage to mourn over a cause which he had murdered in cold blood! How chivalrously did he reassert his right again to war upon his country's peace and happiness whenever his self-love and insatiable ambition shall again prompt him to put on the habiliments of war! How mellifluously did he chant the glories of those "unreconstructed" ladies of the South upon whose influence he seems chiefly to rely for putting in movement a new scheme of rebellion! Well, really, if this foolish game is forever to be played by simpletons and unappeasable factionists, and if a new war cry is to be raised upon the sacred soil of Virginia, it seems to be high time that the friends of the Union and the Constitution should everywhere unite to put down by one glorious and patriotic effort all who seek to bring upon us again the unnameable horrors of a bloody civil war.

However serious may be the misconstruction to which Mr. Davis' present conduct, and that of those with whom he is apparently in combination, may expose many of the long-suffering citizens of the South, it is, nevertheless, absolutely true that he is at this moment the representative of no considerable class of our Southern people; and it would therefore be alike cruel and unjust to hold others responsible for his unseemly and incoherent ravings.

APPENDIX.

CÆSARISM.

There have been so many allusions made in the preceding Reminiscences to *Cæsarism*, that it has been judged proper to publish in this form a review of Napoleon's "Cæsar," which made its first appearance about a year before the commencement of the Reminiscences themselves.—H. S. F.

HISTORY OF JULIUS CÆSAR, BY LOUIS NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

HENRY S. FOOTE.

Ten years have now run their varied course of good and evil since something like a formal notification was given to the world that a new Life of Julius Cæsar would soon emanate from the French Imperial press; this work was to be dignified with the name of History—the earliest copies of which, adorned with all suitable emblazonry, were to be transmitted to the crowned potentates of earth, respectively, after which the untitled multitudes of all countries under the sun would be graciously allowed to read, to admire, and to do fitting homage to the lessons of genuine Napoleonic wisdom which were expected to be embodied in the volumes that were now almost ready to take their place in the select libraries of the

learned and the tasteful. An announcement so unusual was doubtless productive of some effect in certain quarters, and it is probable that many individuals, both in Europe and in America, felt more or less of a certain curiosity touching the contents of a work whose advent had been so pompously heralded.

Cæsar and his achievements—his daring and unscrupulous ambition—his criminal and vaulting aspirations, and his bloody, but deserved death, had constituted for nearly nineteen centuries a favorite subject of dissertation and comment. These matters had, indeed, to some extent become of late years a little trite and unsavory to many, and under ordinary circumstances would not have been likely to provoke to a renewed discussion of them any mind at all original in its cast, and capable of grappling with a healthful and effective energy the great questions of every kind daily rising to view in this age of progress and enlightenment. Yet it can not be justly denied that there is much in the example of Cæsar and his bloodily triumphant career as a destroyer of civil liberty to enkindle something of a peculiar sympathy in the bosom of such as distrust the capacity of man for self-government, and who regard it as in the order of Providence to commission certain persons, supposed to be embued with a wisdom far beyond the reach of all ordinary mortals, to take imperial charge of all the concerns of municipal government, and to guide and regulate the whole body of the untaught and unteachable rabble of mankind for their own happiness and advancement. It is quite certain that no civil tyrant who has yet figured upon the page of history, since Cæsar ceased to live, has failed to select him as his idolized exemplar; and it seems quite probable that in all future ages the Cromwells, the Napoleons, and the rest, will be found, as it has been in the past, so far, at least, as it may chance to be in their power, to follow most trustingly

in the footsteps of their grand prototype, expecting, of course, to shelter themselves from deserved odium under the authority of one whom they are themselves so much interested in exalting beyond the reach of criticism or censure, and in surrounding him with an adscititious splendor in which they may be understood as more or less participating.

But the Life of Julius Cæsar had been already written more than once, and in a manner altogether satisfactory, by authors of acknowledged distinction; and all that remained to us of his writings had undergone repeated translation, so that it was not clearly seen what more was capable of being said or written in illustration of such virtues as he might be supposed to have possessed, or in exposition of such crimes as he was understood to have perpetrated. It could not but be well known to many, also, that the celebrated Charles V, who took Cæsar for his model, had left behind him a copy of the famous Commentaries, lavishly bespread with many characteristic marginal notes; that the Sultan Soliman, his cotemporary, had caused Europe to be ransacked for all the copies of the Commentaries then extant, with a view to the careful collection of them, and the publication of a corrected copy in the Turkish language; that Henry IV of France had himself given a French version to the two first books of the Commentaries; that Louis XIII had translated the two last, and that these four, having been tacked together, had undergone publication at the Louvre in 1630. Nor had it been yet forgotten that Louis XIV had, with a view to giving evidence of his own scholarship, translated anew the first book of the Commentaries, (in rather clumsy French, it must be confessed;) that the great Condé, himself of royal extraction, was well known to be a diligent student of the campaigns recorded in the Commentaries, and had been the special patron of a new edition of the

whole work, presented in a French dress by Nicholas Perrot d'Ablancourt; that the eccentric Christina, Queen of Sweden, had sought immortality by coupling her name with that of the renowned "*veni, vidi, vici*" conqueror in a singular treatise entitled "Reflections on the Life and Actions of Cæsar;" and, to close this splendid catalogue of illustrious names, that the First Napoleon, when at St. Helena, had done homage to the genius of his acknowledged prototype by dictating a volume, afterward published in Paris, under the name of "*Precis des guerres de Cesar.*"

Now, considering these facts and others of a kindred character, there would seem really not to have been any special *literary* necessity for the laborious preparation and industrious promulgation of the two cumbrous volumes which we now hold under critical examination—to be followed, it may be, hereafter, by another brace of them of a similar complexion and character.

We do not hesitate to say, and we say it with much deliberation, too, that the first of these boasted volumes is, in a mere *historic* point of view, little more than a loose and indigested compendium of facts connected with the rise and progress of the Roman State and people, the most important of which are to be found set forth in works far less voluminous, and in a style far more attractive; while the second volume is occupied almost entirely with a very free and oftentimes a highly inaccurate translation of certain books of the Commentaries; except that the imperial author has condescended, here and there, to favor us with his own opinion upon certain disputed facts, with the reasons upon which these opinions purport to be bottomed, most of which opinions are manifestly overstrained and ludicrously fanciful.

If there be any who are at a loss to understand what precise objects the celebrated ex-Emperor of the French had

in view in the publication of this work, they will see these very distinctly presented in the singular preface with which it is accompanied; an extract or two from which will be here brought forward:

"When extraordinary acts attest an eminent genius, what is more contrary to good sense than to ascribe to him all the passions and sentiments of *mediocrity?* What more erroneous than not to recognize the pre-eminence of those *privileged beings* who appear in history from time to time, like luminous beacons, dissipating the darkness of their epoch, and throwing light upon the future? To deny this pre-eminence would, indeed, be to insult humanity, by believing it capable of submitting, long and voluntarily, to a domination which did not rest on true greatness and incontestible utility. Let us be logical and we shall be just."

It is not at all difficult to see that the sort of *logic* here so commendingly alluded to is nothing but the odious *jus divinum* in a somewhat new and beguiling form; such logic as may be conveniently applied to all the systems of despotism heretofore existing on earth; for but few of these can be mentioned in which *time* had not lent its hollow and unmeaning sanction to *usurped power*, or in which oft-repeated but unsuccessful attempts to overthrow a hated tyranny had not taught long-oppressed and soul-torpified millions the *policy* of *apparent acquiescence.*

Let us return to this bold and out-spoken preface: "But by what sign," continues the author, "are we to recognize a man's greatness? By the *empire of his ideas*, when his *principles* and his *system* triumph in spite of defeat. Is it not, in fact, the peculiarity of genius to survive destruction and to extend its empire over future generations? Cæsar disappeared, and his influence predominates even more than during his life."

Who can, after reading the above extracts, doubt that

the prime object of the imperial author was to aid, so far as it might be in his power to do so, the *diffusion* and *eternization* of what he understood to be the *principles* and *system* of Cæsar? With Cæsar's name is embodied indissolubly the idea of *usurpation* and the destruction of republican freedom. Cæsar was the most adroit and successful demagogue or adulator of the people that the world has known. Cæsar believed implicitly that he was *born* to *rule* over the credulous and confiding multitude, and regarded it as justifiable, on his part, to employ any means whatever which might seem most likely to attain the gratification of his ambition. Cæsar *did* succeed in the establishment of an *irresponsible despotism.* When he was taken off by assassination, he had thoroughly concentrated all civil and military power in his own hands. There was no longer freedom of speech, or freedom of action in any part of the earth held under Roman authority. It seems to us to be about the easiest thing in the world to understand what was Cæsar's "system," and what were his "principles;" and it would be quite as easy to define the "systems" and "principles" of those who have attempted to tread the pathway, first blazed out by him, to imperial domination at the *expense of popular liberty!!*

In further illustration of this matter, we cite the following additional extract: "The preceding remarks sufficiently explain the *aim* I have in view in writing this history. This aim is to prove that when Providence raises up such men as Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon it is *to trace out to peoples the path they ought to follow;* to stamp with the seal of their genius a new era; and to accomplish, in a few years, the labor of centuries. Happy the people who comprehend and follow them! woe to those who misunderstand them! They do as the Jews did, they crucify their Messiah; they are blind and culpable: blind, for they do not see the impotence of their efforts to

suspend the definitive triumph of good ; culpable, for they only retard progress by impeding its prompt and fruitful application."

He continues : "In fact, neither the murder of Cæsar, nor the captivity of St. Helena, has been able to destroy two popular causes overthrown by a league which disguised itself under the mask of liberty. Brutus, by destroying Cæsar, plunged Rome into the horrors of civil war; he did not prevent the reign of Augustus, but he rendered possible those of Nero and Caligula. The ostracism of Napoleon by confederated Europe has been no more successful in preventing the empire from being resuscitated; and, nevertheless, how far are we from the great questions solved, the passions calmed, and the legitimate satisfactions given to people by the first empire."

We would, indeed, like very much to know to what peoples the legitimate satisfactions spoken of as having been enjoyed under the boasted First Empire were really imparted; and we are curious to know, also, the precise nature of these same satisfactions, and whether similar satisfactions of the same legitimate character accrued to any people on earth from the establishment of that monstrous system of tyranny called the Second Empire, and which was recently brought to an end so disastrously and bloodily as the natural result of a most ill-advised and unpardonable war. We opine that the melancholy exile of Chiselhurst, though even not yet effectually cured of the insane and selfish ambition which has cursed his whole life, if he ever now ventures to glance over this over-wrought and ostentatious preface of his, must blush and blush deeply, too, over the evidences therein embodied of his own ineffable vanity and shallowness.*

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* This article was written and published about ten days before Louis Napoleon's death.

Perhaps, taking all the attendant circumstances into consideration, we should not be altogether justified in avowing any strong feeling of surprise that the French Emperor should have felt it to be a part of his special *mission* into this breathing and bustling world to write just such a book as this in vindication of the cause of *usurpation*. He was, at the time that these volumes made their appearance at the very zenith of his ill-gotten power. Four hundred thousand men in arms—a much larger number than Julius Cæsar himself had ever commanded—acknowledged him as their military chief. He was living in the palaces of an ancient and once powerful dynasty, and thousands of slavish, gorgeously arrayed courtiers poured every moment into his ears the streams of an insincere and dishonoring adulation. All Europe stood agaze at the scene of grandeur which surrounded him, and some who ought to have known better allowed themselves to be recognized as the admirers of his wisdom, and the approvers of his policy. Like Cæsar, and the First Napoleon, he had grown opulent by the pillage of the public treasury of a generous and confiding people, and from the same source he had enriched the whole body of his kinsmen and dependants. He had been engaged in several great wars, and, thanks to the valor of his soldiers and the ability of his generals, he had come forth from each of them triumphant. He was the acknowledged champion and protector of the venerated head of the ancient Catholic Church. He had added new dignity to the throne which he had usurped, by inter-marriage with a lady of the most splendid beauty and of the rarest graces and accomplishments. A son had been born to him of this marriage, who was already the recognized inheritor of an imperial greatness, which shallow and unthinking multitudes were everywhere predicting would equal the domination of the Roman Cæsars in duration, and be far more glorious. He had by arts of

various kinds thus far managed to keep the passions of a mercurial and easily-excited people in a state of comparative quietude and repose. He had made more than one literary experiment before, ere he became the incumbent of a throne; and productions of his pen, once laughed at for their folly, the sagacious critics of the world had at last found out to be written with more than Ciceronian elegance, and replete with practical wisdom.

The territorial expanse of the old world had been found too narrow to supply a suitable arena for the display of his enterprising and all-conquering genius; and he had sought increase of personal glory, and a new field for his ideas of imperial domination beyond the rolling ocean. He had just dispatched a large army to unhappy Mexico, and demanded the erection there of a new imperial throne, upon which was soon to be seated, under his own special tutelage and control, a promising scion of the time-honored Hapsburg family. It has been whispered in certain circles that he had already contemplated the speedy extension of his boasted "system and principles" to the natal soil of Washington. How true this may be we shall at present hazard no conjecture. If he had established twenty regal governments in North America he would, in doing so, have been only following the example of Julius Cæsar whilst he sojourned in Gaul, and that of the First Napoleon whilst at the head of his conquering armies.

Under the circumstances just specified, what more natural occurrence could have taken place than the sending forth from the French imperial press, in 1862, of such a book as that which we are noticing, as a sort of *avant-courier* of the momentous *world-revolution* which it was expected to usher in?

Whilst contemplating the execution of this herculean task, it was doubtless regarded as a fact of no inauspicious

augury that but few of the occupants of thrones had, either in ancient or modern times, been known to attempt authorship upon a grand scale; for the chances of acquiring renown in any field of human labor must of necessity bear some proportion to the fewness of those who come forward as competitors for the coveted prize. Besides, it is undoubtedly true, as has been abundantly proved in the present instance, that a writer of history, or of any other literary work, if he be a royal personage, at least so long as he shall be able to hold in his grasp the reins of authority, will be far less exposed to the shafts of criticism than would any private individual. If we have not been misinformed on this subject, his Imperial Majesty, before he allowed these precious historic volumes to see the light in France, put in action protective machinery of a very effective character to save his own well-earned fame from unjust and illiberal attack. We recollect to have heard of at least one enterprising French pamphleteer who had to fly with much precipitation beyond the Gallic confines for having referred to this same book and its imperial author in language deemed irreverent, and had this experiment upon the patience of Majesty been once or twice repeated there is no knowing what a fearful combustion might have been produced among the literary coteries of the French capital. When the lordly inhabitant of a regal palace condescends to enlighten the world upon grave questions of state, it is but proper perhaps that he should be listened to with more than ordinary patience. Such at least has been the way of mankind in all past ages. The famed tyrant of Syracuse is known to have been much praised in the literary circles of Greece until his noted falling out with Plato, the then chief of the world of letters; Frederic the Great, of Prussia, was recognized as an elegant writer of French, and a profound philosopher into the bargain, until he threw into prison his

once admired friend, Voltaire; and the adulators who thronged the golden palace of Nero, (some of whom were not altogether undistinguished in the ranks of literature,) pronounced him a better writer of poetry than either Virgil or Horace, and more polished and vigorous as a composer of prose than Livy or Tully; and even the pure-minded and erudite Quintilian, whilst he saw in the hands of Domitian the uplifted scourge of imperial authority, deemed it politic to say of this monster that he would certainly have been the greatest of poets (*maximum poetarum*,) but that the Gods had found it necessary to burden him with the cares of state.

In regard to the particular style in which the history of Julius Cæsar is written, there is not a great deal either to commend or censure. It is more a compilation than a history; and there is but little which can justly lay claim to originality, either in phrase or sentiment. It does not at all resemble the famous commentaries, either in simple dignity of expression or in easy and graceful flow of diction. It is as an artistic production decidedly below mediocrity; its style is exceedingly rugged and cumbrous; it is remarkable for neither vigor, sprightliness, nor perspicuity; and it exhibits a continual straining after *effect* which is positively disgusting. It is ostentatious without impressiveness; magniloquent and high-sounding without the least approach to true grandeur, either of sentiment or phraseology.

But we shall not dwell upon this head; there are matters of much higher moment which remain to be discussed. For, be it known, that we are far from thinking that the world should feel any great surprise at our imperial biographer's deficiencies as a writer. It would have been simply absurd for anyone to expect him to equal Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus as a delineator of grave, historic events, or to place himself upon a footing with the best descrip-

tive authors that France or England has produced in modern times. His early education is understood not by any means to have been such as was best calculated to give development and expansion to the higher intellectual faculties, and for many years anterior to the fall of Louis Phillippe he is well known to have led a loose and rambling life, eminently unpropitious to sound moral culture or healthful mental training.

Our objections to the ex-Emperor of the French, as a writer of history, are of a far graver and deeper character than has yet been more than intimated. He seems to us, in these same volumes of his, to have attempted the perversion of truth in many important instances, and to have assailed with unsparing virulence many of the noblest patriots and sagest statesmen of whom antiquity can boast, for the attainment of purposes merely selfish in their character. He has selected Julius Cæsar as the subject of exorbitant and unmixed commendation, and invested him with attributes to which he never had a just claim, hoping that he would be able in this way to conceal the hideousness of his unparalleled usurpation, and rescue from just odium also certain others who, in imitation of his example, have attained supreme power by perfidy, by corruption, and by bloodshed; calculating doubtless that by pursuing this course, he would have it in his power to beguile the mass of mankind into a voluntary and disgraceful abandonment of the most sacred rights of freedom.

We do not propose here to enter into a copious citation of particulars in order to establish the charges which we have preferred. We have not sufficient space, nor is it at all necessary that we should do so.

That Julius Cæsar was one of the most intellectual men that the world has yet known we have never for a moment doubted. Even Cicero himself says of him, in one of his

famous Philippics, when applauding Brutus and his brother conspirators for having put him to death: "In that man were combined genius, method, memory, literature, prudence, deliberation, and industry. He had performed exploits in war which, though calamitous for the Republic, were nevertheless mighty deeds. Having for many years aimed at being a *king*, he had, with great labor and much personal danger, accomplished what he intended. He had conciliated the ignorant multitude by presents, by monuments, by largesses of food, and by banquets; he had bound his own party to him by rewards, his adversaries by the *appearances of clemency*. Why need I say so much on such a subject? He had already *brought a free city, partly* by *fear*, *partly* by *suffering*, into a *habit of servitude*."

We need not refer to the celebrated declaration of Quintilian, that "Cæsar talked with the same vigor that he fought." Nor is it important that the celebrated parallel drawn by Sallust between Cæsar and Cato should be more than incidentally referred to here. We freely admit that nature had lavishly bestowed the choicest of her gifts upon the extraordinary man of whom we are speaking. Nor are we permitted to doubt that he possessed all the literary and scientific accomplishments known to the age in which he flourished.

As a commander of armies, it is probable that he has never been equaled. As an adroit and successful party leader, he has certainly never been surpassed. No one was ever more profoundly skilled in the art of managing men. But other questions remain to be solved. Was he a patriot in the truest and fullest sense of the word? Did he prefer his country's peace and welfare to his own personal advancement? Was he a sincere believer in the capacity of man for self-government? Was he a true respecter of popular rights and of republican institutions?

Was he a man of probity and uprightness? Did he possess in an eminent degree the domestic and social virtues? Did he prefer the society of virtuous and patriotic men to that of the licentious and the profligate? Did he seek civil promotion only by fair and patriotic and honorable expedients? Is it fortunate for the Roman government and people that Cæsar was born, and flourished, and acquired imperishable personal renown? Has his example as a public man and as a private citizen been, on the whole, advantageous to the human race in general, or the reverse? We feel confident that to none of these queries can a favorable response be given without seriously violating the truth of history.

In support of this view of the matter, it will not be necessary to go beyond those details embodied in the volumes of his latest biographer; from whose pages we learn that Julius Cæsar was born at Rome, in the six hundred and fifty-fourth year of the Republic, and that he was of an ancient and distinguished family. "On one side," says the History, "he claimed to be descended from Anchises and Venus; on the other, he was the nephew of the famous Caius Marius, the husband of his aunt Julia." When Cæsar was thirty-two years of age he delivered a funeral oration in honor of his aunt, and in that oration formally proclaimed this important genealogical fact, in hearing of a vast concourse of the Roman people. This circumstance, as unimportant as it may seem to many, indicated clearly enough his own conviction that he was himself born for empire, and his determination to seek power, as Marius had done before him, by doing homage to the feelings of the populace. His education was as well attended to as was then possible at Rome, and before he had attained to the years of manhood he enjoyed all the facilities possible to be supplied for acquiring a knowledge of the Greek language and literature. "He united," says

the History, "to goodness of heart a high intelligence, to an invincible courage an enthralling eloquence, a wonderful memory, and unbounded generosity; finally, he possessed one rare quality—calmness under anger." * * "His tall stature, his rounded and well proportioned limbs, stamped his person with a grace that distinguished him from all others. He had black eyes, a piercing look, a pale complexion, a straight and high nose. His mouth small, and regular, but with rather thick lips, gave a kindly expression to the lower part of his face, whilst his breadth of brow betokened the development of the intellectual faculties. His face was full, at least in his youth; for in his busts, doubtless made toward the end of his life, his features are thinner and bear marks of fatigue. He had a sonorous and penetrating voice, a noble gesture, and an air of dignity reigned over all his person." We learn further from the History, that he "paid special attention to his person, carefully shaved, or plucked out his beard, and artistically brought his hair forward to the front of his head, which, in more advanced age, served to conceal his bald forehead. He was reproached with the affectation of scratching his head with one finger only, so that he should not disarrange his hair. His toilet was refined: his toga was generally ornamented with a laticlavium, fringed down to the hands, and fastened by a girdle carelessly tied about his loins; a costume which distinguished the elegant and effeminate youths of the period." * * * "He had a taste for pictures, statues, and jewels; and in memory of his origin always wore on his finger a ring on which was engraved the figure of an armed Venus."

"Such," continues the imperial biographer, "was Cæsar at the age of eighteen, when Sylla seized the dictatorship. Already he attracted all eyes at Rome by his name, his intellect, his affable manners, which pleased men, and perhaps some women, too."

It is a little difficult to divine how the royal biopragher of Cæsar should have felt it necessary so ostentatiously to parade some of these curious trivialities before the public eye, unless the reason of his doing so is to be found in the following extract from another page of his work: "Not satisfied with conciliating the good will of the people, Cæsar won for himself the favor of the noblest dames of Rome; and notwithstanding his notorious passion for women, we can not but discover a *political aim* in his choice of *mistresses*, since all held by different ties to men who were then playing, or were destined to play, an important part. He had important relations with Tertulla, the wife of Crassus; with Mucia, wife of Pompey; with Lollia, wife of Aulus Gabinius, who was consul in 696; with Postumia, wife of Servius Sulspicius, who was raised to the consulship in 703, and persuaded to join Cæsar's party by her influence; but the woman he preferred was Servilia, sister of Cato, and mother of Brutus, to whom, during his consulship, he gave a pearl valued at six millions of sesterces (1,140,000 frances,or 45,600 pounds.) This connection throws an air of improbability (thinks our grave and sagacious historian,) over the reports then in circulation that Servilia favored an intrigue between him and her daughter Tertia. Was it by the intermediation of Tertulla that Crassus was reconciled to Cæsar?"

These are truly extraordinary details to be presented, without a syllable of censure, by the imperial head of a family, who boasts himself to be a true devotee to the Christian faith, and from whom the world had a right to to demand, in an especial manner, an example of social decency, if not of elevated morality. If in connection with such facts as those just mentioned we take into consideration Cæsar's famous dalliance in Alexandria with Cleopatra; his known intimacy with Mark Antony, the most profligate of mankind; with Clodius, on account of

whose suspected intimacy with his own wife, Pompeia, he had driven her from his house; and even with the infamous Catiline himself, a fact which his present august historian does not attempt to deny, we shall be prepared to place a proper estimate upon certain other remarkable particulars in Cæsar's public career which are now to be runningly alluded to.

In 680 or 681 Cæsar was nominated by his friends to the office of pontiff, because, as is alleged, they thought it expedient that he should be "clothed with a sacred character." He seems to have taken no part in the servile war then raging. He was about the same period made military tribune, which gave him command of a thousand soldiers. In 676 he accompanied Aristius Vetus to Ulterior Spain in the capacity of questor. There he gained no marked distinction; but it is recorded of him that whilst occupied with the duties of the questorship he went one day to the famous temple of Hercules, at Gades, as Hannibal and Scipio had done before him. "At the sight of the statue of Alexander he deplored with a sigh that he had done nothing at the age when this great man had conquered the world." On his return to Rome he sustained, in conjunction with Cicero, the famous Manillian law which enabled Pompey, then in the zenith of his popularity, to supplant Lucullus in the managment of the Mithridatic war. He had already conceived the project, afterward so adroitly executed, of winning the confidence and frindship of Pompey with a view to the advancement of his own fortune, in a few years to be realized in the formation of the first Triumvirate. In 687 he was chosen curator of the Appian way. Two years subsequent he was made *curule adile*. In this last office he incurred vast expenses, and became overwhelmingly involved in debt. It was at this precise period that he ventured to test the state of popular feeling in Rome in

regard to his uncle Marius, having evidently made up his mind to run the same daring and sanguinary career should it become necessary to the gratification of his ambition. He restored the trophies of Marius which had been overturned by Sylla, and in the night time had them placed in the Capitol. In 690 Cæsar, acting in the capacity of *Judex questionnis*, sat upon the trial of Catiline, charged with the murder of M. Marius Gratidianus, and *acquitted* him. In 691 Cæsar openly supported Catiline for the consulship against Cicero and others of the noblest patriots in Rome. In explanation of his censurable conduct on this occasion his present imperial *laudator* says: "In a spirit of opposition he supported all that could *hurt his enemies and favor a change of system.*" How could Catiline himself have done worse? Within the next year or two he became the zealous supporter of an Agrarian law, and of other measures looking to the benefit of the provinces; and was evidently increasing in popularity every day. In 692 the Catiline conspirators were brought to trial before the Senate, condemned and executed, Cæsar opposing the infliction of capital punishment upon them, and making a bold and energetic speech on the occasion. Suspected by the Roman Knights, who surrounded the Capitol at the time in arms, his life was saved alone by the magnanimous interposition of Cicero. At this stage of his history our imperial author interposes a well-known anecdote, in these words: "A singular incident happened, in the midst of these debates, to show to what point Cæsar had awakened the people's suspicions. At the most animated moment of the discussion a letter was brought to him. He read it with eagerness. Cato and other senators, supposing it to be a message from one of the conspirators, insisted upon its being read to the Senate. Cæsar handed the letter to Cato, who was seated near him. The latter saw it was a love-letter from his

sister Servilia, and threw it back indignantly, crying out, 'There! keep it drunkard!'"

In 692 Cæsar was Pretor-urbanus, and during his occupancy of that office became more and more closely allied to Pompey. Scenes of great turbulence now ensued, in which Cæsar and Cato, as leaders of opposing parties, once or twice had serious personal collisions. From 693 to 695 Cæsar was pro-pretor to Spain. When about setting out for his province, his creditors, whose claims amounted altogether to £200,000, attempted to have him arrested, and it seems that he would have been compelled to submit to this humiliation but for the kindness of Crassus, who, on being applied to, advanced to Cæsar enough to discharge all his pressing liabilities.

Such being the desperate condition of his fortunes, the following anecdote will not at all surprise us: On Cæsar's journey to Spain he halted for a few hours at a wretched village amid the Alps, when some of his officers having inquired of him whether he thought that even in this remote and sequestered place there were solicitations and rivalries for office, he answered: "I would rather be the first among these savages than second in Rome." Truly the grand Cæsaro-Napoleonic "fixed idea" of imperial sovereignty was now rapidly *cropping out!*

During his sojourn in Spain Cæsar is stated in the History to have "amassed a rich booty, which enabled him to reward his soldiers and to pay considerable sums into the treasury without being accused of peculation or of arbitrary acts." Behold him now on the way to opulence and power! He returns to Rome, stands for the consulship and is elected. This result, as our historian confesses, was mainly owing to the secret compact then set on foot by Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus, in accordance with the terms of which the Republic was to be in future ruled by their *triple counsels*. "The alliance," says the History,

"which these three persons ratified by their oaths remained long a secret; and it was only during Cæsar's consulship that it became a matter of public notoriety, from the unanimity they displayed in all their public resolutions." A more profligate and unprincipled combination than this is not known in history; and yet our historian has not a word of censure to bestow on it. He confesses that this conspiracy was chiefly brought about by the management of Cæsar, of whom he says: "In the midst of conflicting opinions and interests, the presence of a man *of steady purpose* and *deeply rooted convictions*, and illustrious through recent victories, was without any doubt an event. He did not require long to form his estimate of the situation, and as he could not yet unite the masses for the realization of a grand idea, he thought to unite the chiefs by a *common interest*." Verily, this is an exceedingly frank declaration!

A highly significant and illustrative fact is mentioned in the History in connection with the consular election which has been just spoken of. "Among the candidates was Caius Lucceius. Cæsar was desirous of attaching to his interest this person, who was distinguished alike by his writings and character, and who possessed of vast wealth had promised to make abundant use of it, for *their common profit*, in order to command the majority of votes in the centuries." The party opposed to Cæsar, embracing the greater part of the Senate, deeply distrusting Cæsar, and painfully apprehending the speedy overthrow of liberty, should Cæsar not only succeed in being elected himself but also secure the choice of a colleague sure to be subservient to all his designs, though despairing of defeating the election of Cæsar himself, were able by a great and energetic effort to give to Cæsar Bibulus for a colleague, who, it was known, would do all he could to save the Republic from present ruin; and for thus post-

poning for a few years the realization of the grand Imperialistic Idea are soundly berated by our historian.

Before he set out as pro-consul to the new theater which had been with some reluctance assigned him he took care to make all safe in his rear. At his instance, his brother consented to allow L. Piso, the father-in-law of Cæsar, to be elected to the consulship, with A. Gabinius, the devoted partisan of Pompey. "They were, in fact, designated consuls on the 18th of October, in spite of the opposition of the Senate, and at the time of the accusation of Cato against Gabinius, Cæsar," says the History, "found himself at the gates of Rome, invested with the *imperium*, and, according to Cicero's letters, at the head of numerous troops, composed apparently of veteran volunteers. He even remained there more than two months, in order to watch that his departure should not become the signal for the overthrow of his work."

Again, says the History, "Cæsar had skillfully taken precautions that his influence should be felt at Rome during his absence as much as the instability of the magistracy would permit. By the aid of his daughter Julia, whose charms and mental accomplishments captivated her husband, Cæsar retained his influence over Pompey. By his favors to the son of Crassus, a young man of great merit, who was appointed his lieutenant, he assured himself of his father. Cicero is removed, (by the efforts of Cæsar's friend Clodius,) but Cæsar will soon consent to his return, and will conciliate him again by taking into his favor his brother Quintus. There remains the opposition of Cato. Clodius undertakes to remove him under the pretense of an honorable mission. Finally all the men of importance who had any chance of obtaining employment are gained to the cause of Cæsar; some even engage themselves to him in writing. He can thus proceed to his province. *Destiny is about to open a new path;* immor-

tal glory awaits him beyond the Alps, and this glory reflected upon Rome will change the face of the world."

And so, indeed, it was. Every successful campaign of Cæsar beyond the Alps strengthened him prodigiously at Rome. Military glory, that bane of all republics, soon made a single renowned chief too strong for his country's liberties. What Cromwell was long afterward in England, what Napoleon the First was in France at a still later period, Cæsar was soon to become in Rome. When the dangers which menaced the Roman government and people began to be clearly descried it was too late to provide against them. Cæsar, instigated by Mark Antony and Curio, *at last passed the Rubicon*, and Roman freedom was forever lost!

Nothing could be possibly more unprofitable than would prove on our part any attempt to follow our imperial historian into the examination which he has thought proper to institute between the rival claims of Pompey and Cæsar to control the fate of the republic, or to find out how far Cæsar may have been supplied with grounds of complaint, more or less plausible, against those who were struggling to prevent his election to the consulship—so long as he should have an army under his command ready, at any moment, to place him in a position altogether beyond civil responsibility for any unauthorized acts he might perform. It may be, as urged in his behalf, that Cæsar had some grounds of complaint against certain public men in Rome, who were inimical to him and his advancement. It may be that the language of distrust and apprehension used by the consul Marcellus and others was of a nature to irritate his sensibilities and mortify his self-love. It may even be true that had he disbanded his army, as he had been ordered to do, he would have been subjected to trial for many of his unjustifiable acts of oppression and tyranny in Gaul. But his obvious duty

as a patriotic citizen was to submit promptly and decorously to the orders of the Roman government and people, and when he refused to do so, that instant he became a great public criminal; and when he marched an army in hostile array upon Roman soil for the purpose of putting down by force the existing government, and establishing in its stead an *Imperial Despotism*, he assumed an attitude which no sound-judging and just-minded man will ever think of upholding. The silly excuse set up in behalf of Cæsar by his latest and least reliable biographer, that he was "a man of fixed ideas," and that he was only the minister of destiny in giving to these a grand realization, is altogether too absurd to deserve formal refutation. We are quite willing to cite in this place, and without special comment thereupon, the very words employed by the illustrious biographer of Cæsar himself, in justification of this part of his conduct. Here they are:

"The moment for action had arrived, Cæsar was reduced to the alternative of maintaining himself at the head of his army, in spite of the Senate, or surrendering himself to his enemies, who would have reserved for him the fate of the accomplices of Catiline who had been condemned to death, if he were not, like the Gracchi Saturninus, and so many others, killed in a popular tumult. Here the question naturally offers itself, Ought not Cæsar, who had so often faced death on the battle-field, have gone to Rome to face it under another form, and to have renounced his command, rather than engage in a struggle which must throw the Republic into all the horrors of civil war? Yes, if by his abnegation he could save Rome from anarchy, corruption, and tyranny. No, if his abnegation would endanger what he had most at heart, the regeneration of the Republic. Cæsar, like men of his temper, cared little for life, and still less for power for the sake of power, but as the chief of the popular party, he

felt a great cause rise behind him, it urged him forward, and obliged him to conquer *in spite of legality*, the imprecations of his adversaries, and the uncertain judgment of posterity. Roman society, in a state of dissolution, *asked for a master:* oppressed Italy, for a representative of its rights; the world, bowed under a yoke, for a *Savior*. Ought he by deserting his *mission* disappoint so many legitimate hopes, so many noble aspirations?"

The truth is that the course pursued by Cæsar and his comrades in iniquity, after Pompey and his ill-organized army had fled from Brundusium to Greece, leaves not a shadow of doubt upon the motives and purposes of those who had now initiated that worst of all evils that can assail humanity—*civil war!* For, returning to Rome, he broke into the public treasury and took out therefrom all the money of which he stood in need; declared himself perpetual Dictator; and, after placing in the highest official positions some of the most notoriously corrupt and dissolute men to be found in Rome, he proceeded to Spain, where he prosecuted a fierce and sanguinary war with the Republic; and then, going into Greece, he encountered in arms another body of Roman soldiers, organized also under the authority of the Republic, with which he knew to be associated, (using the language of Cicero,) "the consuls, and with these Cneius Pompeius, the light and glory of the Roman empire and people, all the men of consular rank whose health would allow them to share in the toils of war, the prætors and all men of prætorian rank, and the tribunes and the greater part of the Senate, all the flower of the youth of the city;" and, after the fatal battle of Pharsalia had been fought, proceeding to Africa, in pursuit of Pompey, he dispatched the infamous Mark Antony to Italy, who there ravaged the whole land and committed such atrocities of every kind as have perhaps never been equaled in any other civilized country under

the sun. Nor is this all, for when Cæsar, after a long absence, at last returned to Rome, so far was he from holding Mark Antony responsible for all his abominable misdeeds, that he again took him to his bosom as his most favored friend and counselor, and even raised him to the consulship as his own official colleague.

It is to us truly astonishing that in an age so enlightened as the present one any man should have the effrontery to justify Julius Cæsar in the perpetration of all these enormities, and that he should even go so far as to urge his example upon mankind as entitled to their respect and imitation.

There is one other topic to which we propose to give a brief examination. It is urged by the author of the new History that Cæsar is entitled to especial admiration by reason of his admitted *clemency*, compared with other military personages who might be mentioned. In this matter he is only repeating the language of Sallust, who though an able and instructive writer, is well known to have been one of the most corrupt and profligate men then residing in Rome; who had been even expelled from the Senate on account of grave offenses against the public morals committed by him; and who owed his restoration to the membership of that body, which he had forfeited, to the kindness of Cæsar, whom he had joined on the road from Arminium to lower Italy, when the scheme of invasion was already in actual progress. Whether this asserted clemency of Cæsar was only *seeming*, and not real, as is declared by Cicero and others, may be decided by a consideration of the following well-attested facts:

In his celebrated campaigns in Gaul, Germany, and Britain—most of which were begun and prosecuted without any formal authorization from Rome, and in the progress of which he exercised powers such as did not legitimately appertain to his station—especially in the

making and unmaking kings at pleasure; he did undoubtedly cause more blood to be ruthlessly shed and terrible sufferings to be undergone by the vanquished than had ever before dishonored the Roman eagles. We have space only for the presentation of a few prominent facts.

1. After the last decisive battle with the Helvetians, he ordered 6,000 valiant soldiers, called *Berbegeni* on account of their having attempted simply to avoid, by separate flight, the disastrous fate of the great body of their countrymen, either to be put to death or sold as slaves.

2. The Veneti, a maritime people, located upon the Northern coast of Gaul, and who are reported to have carried on an active and profitable commerce with Britain, whose sole fault, as alleged in the Commentaries, consisted in the detaining of several Roman deputies sent into their country by Cæsar for supplies of corn, (which act of detention had only been resorted to in order to compel Cæsar to send back their own hostages, demanded of them as they conceived without any just authority,) were subjected to all the horrors of an unsparing war, both upon the land and upon the water. When at last crushed by superior force, in a battle which was begun at ten o'clock in the morning and continued until sunset, the Veneti having lost all their youth, all their principal citizens, and all their fleet, were forced to surrender at discretion. Here was a noble field for the display of moderation and magnanimity. Cæsar's own Commentaries confess the fact that in this state of things the conqueror caused the whole Venetan senate to be put to death, and the rest of the inhabitants to be sold for slaves.

3. A battle was fought by Cæsar with two German tribes, known as the Tencteri and the Usipetes, who were attacked by the Roman forces when they had no right to expect anything of the kind to occur, their chiefs, who had visited Cæsar's camp as negotiators for peace, having

been forcibly detained by him. In the conflict which ensued, the Germans having been completely surprised were thrown into utter confusion; in the midst of which, Cæsar, observing that the women and children who attended upon the camp of the enemy were flying in every direction to a place of safety, ordered them to be indiscriminately massacred by the Roman soldiers. Our historian, so far from censuring the cruel and unmanly conduct of Cæsar on this occasion, finds serious fault with the noble Cato for formally proposing in the Roman Senate that Cæsar, for this atrocious act of mingled perfidy and violence, should be at once surrendered up to the German people to atone for his outrageous violation of the laws of civilized warfare. It would be easy to multiply these sickening details; but we forbear. We are content to close this grim narrative of atrocities with a single additional instance.

4. In the year 701, while Cæsar was south of the Alps, levying additional forces, and superintending political intrigues looking to his own future advancement to supreme power, a general uprising of the eight millions of the noble Gallic nation against the tyrannical domination of Rome took place, under the auspices of an accomplished and high-sprited young chief, himself of royal extraction, by name Vercingetorix. After many scenes of bloody and exhausting strife, in which deeds of prowess were performed on either side as honorable as any which have ever adorned the annals of war, the superior generalship of Cæsar and the persevering energy of the Roman soldiery prevail, and the Gallic States and people are no longer willing to prosecute the war for national independence and freedom. The magnanimous conduct of Vercingetorix at this melancholy crisis is worthy of all praise. He convokes a council of his countrymen. He declares to this council that he has not undertaken this bloody and terri-

ble war "out of personal interest, but for the achievement of the liberty of all." "True," he continues, "we must yield to fate. I place myself at the discretion of my fellow-citizens, and will allow myself, in order to appease the Romans, to be delivered to the enemy, *dead or alive.*"

A deputation bearing this proposition is sent at once to Cæsar, who requires that the arms and the chiefs be delivered to him. He places himself in front of his camp, inside of his intrenchments; the chiefs are brought; the arms are laid down, and Vercingetorix surrenders to the conqueror. "This valiant defender of Gaul," says the History, "arrives on horseback, clad in his finest arms, makes the circuit of Cæsar's tribunal, dismounts, and laying down his sword and his military ensigns, exclaims: '*Thou hast vanquished a brave man, thou, the bravest of all!*'"

Before we notice the fate of this splendid young Gallic hero, we copy from the following from Commentaries: "The prisoners were distributed by head, to each soldier, by way of booty, except the 20,000 who belong to the Edui and Averni, and whom Cæsar restored in the hope of bringing them back to his cause."

As to Cæsar's treatment of Vercingetorix, let Dio Cassius explain: "After this defeat, Vercingetorix, who had neither been taken or wounded, might have fled, but hoping that the friendship which had formerly bound him to Cæsar would procure his pardon he repaired to the proconsul, without having sent a herald to ask for peace, and appeared suddenly in his presence, at the moment he was sitting on his tribunal. His appearance inspired some fear, for he was tall of stature and had a very imposing aspect under arms. There was a deep silence; the Gaulish chief fell at Cæsar's knees, and implored him by pressing his hands, without uttering a word. This scene excited the pity of the bystanders, by the remembrance of Vercingetorix's former prosperity compared with his present

misfortune. Cæsar, on the contrary, upbraided him with the recollections on which he had hoped for his safety. He compared with his recent struggle the friendship of which he reminded him, and by that means pointed out more vividly the odiousness of his conduct. And thus, far from being touched with his misfortunes at that moment, he threw him into fetters, and afterward ordered him to be put to death, after having exhibited him in his triumph."

There is not in all history, as we believe, an instance of greater cruelty and meanness. We know of nothing which can be regarded as even approximating to it in enormity, save the atrocious treatment of Montezuma and Guatamozin by that monstrous chief of bandits, Fernando Cortes himself; and yet, in remarking upon this disgusting transaction, our complaisant writer of history only says: "By acting thus Cæsar believed that he was obeying state policy and the cruel customs of the time. It is to be regretted, for his glory, that he did not use toward Vercingetorix, the illustrious Gaulish chief, the same clemency which, during the civil war, he showed toward the vanquished who were his fellow-citizens."

Now we must confess, that after studying with diligence the history of Cæsar's conduct toward his fellow-citizens during the civil war, we have met with no remarkable evidences of the much-boasted clemency. He certainly did not put to death all the Roman soldiers taken prisoners in battle; and on the contrary manifested on all occasions an eager desire to enlist them under his own banner. It is true that he did not rudely expel all the inhabitants of Italy who had originally opposed his attempted usurpation beyond the confines of that beautiful peninsula; for had he done so he would have left himself but few subjects to be reigned over. It is also true that he extended a sort of insulting forgiveness to such

eminent Roman statesmen as he supposed might be transformed into supporters of his authority. But there were, even at the period of his decease, many nobly patriotic citizens of Rome who were forbidden to show their faces in the Eternal City. A very large majority of those who had openly allied themselves with Pompey and the Senate, in the great struggle for the preservation of liberty, were cruelly stripped of all the property they possessed by the ruffianly ministers of *confiscation;* and even the family of the illustrious commander were by no means excepted from the common fate; in proof of which the high testimony of Cicero is adducible in these heart-rending words: "Cæsar came back from Alexandria, fortunate, as he seemed at least to think himself; but, in my opinion, no man can be fortunate who is not fortunate to the Republic. The spear* was set up in front of Jupiter Stator, and the property of Cneius Pompeius Magnus, (ah! miserable me! for even now that my tears have ceased to flow, my grief remains deeply implanted in my heart;)—the property, I say, of Cneius Pompeius, the great, was submitted to the pitiless auctioneer. On that occasion the State forgot its slavery, and groaned aloud; and although men's minds were enslaved, as everything was kept under by fear, still the groans of the Roman people were free."

Is further evidence desired of Cæsar's tyrannous and unfeeling heart? Let a single well-known scene in Roman history suffice for this purpose. A few months anterior to the infliction of more than Roman justice upon this chief of culprits, repeated and earnest applications were being made in favor of exiled patriots whose presence in Rome was deemed unsafe for the upholders of despotism. The friends of Marcellus were particularly urgent in claiming

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*The custom of erecting a spear wherever an auction was held is well known.

for him the privilege of returning to his native land, which he had so long adorned, in former years, by his virtues not less than his eloquence. At last the whole body of the Senate fell prostrate at the feet of the Dictator, and earnestly implored his pardon, not without the copious shedding of tears.

Thus appealed to, the iron will of the vain-glorious tyrant was constrained, for very shame, to unbend itself. On this occasion it was that Cicero delivered his celebrated oration, "*Pro Marcello*," in which he returned formal and elaborate thanks to Cæsar for doing what, if he had not done, he would have forfeited the respect of all living men. Never would such a speech have been delivered if clemency had been a virtue of familiar practice with him to whom this special offer of gratitude was made!

A single additional remark will conclude our notice of the History of Julius Cæsar by the ex-Emperor of the French. It is asserted in this work that at the time of Cæsar's demise he was getting ready to restore the ancient free institutions of Rome. Never was a more unfounded statement hazarded. It is true, on the contrary, that at this very moment, not content with far more than ordinary kingly authority, he was contemplating his own formal investment with the regal diadem.

Had Brutus and his noble associates not altogether despaired of the resurrection of Roman liberty, save by such means as they, with the fullest deliberation, adopted, never would they have imbrued their hands in the blood of the tyrant! It were gross injustice to all these illustrious men to think otherwise; men of whom Cicero so nobly spoke in the Roman Senate afterward, and employing these memorable words concerning them, which will live as long as the Roman literature shall be known on earth: "If those deliverers of ours have taken themselves away out of our sight, still they have left behind them

the example of their conduct. They have done what no one else has done. Brutus pursued Tarquinius with war: who was a king when it was lawful for a king to exist in Rome. Spurius Cassius, Spurius Melius, and Marcus Manlius were all slain because they were suspected of aiming at regal power. *These* are the first men who have ever ventured to attack, sword in hand, a man who was not aiming at regal power, but *actually reigning*, and their action is not only of itself a glorious and god-like exploit, but it is also one put forth for our imitation: especially as by it they have acquired such glory as appears hardly to be bounded by heaven itself. For although in the very consciousness of a glorious action there is a certain reward, still I do not consider immortality of glory a thing to be despised by one who is himself mortal."

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